



# RHYMES OF RAJPUTANA



# RHYMES OF RAJPUTANA

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AGENT TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL FOR RAJPUTANA

London

MACMILLAN AND CO

AND NEW YORK

1894

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## PREFACE

IN 1829 Colonel James Tod, after an intimate personal acquaintance with the Rajput States dating from 1806 to 1822, published in two big volumes his famous work entitled *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, which is still the chief authority recognised by natives of the country as well as Europeans in all that pertains to the Rajasthan of former days. In that book he laid open from almost every known source, including the classics of Hindustan, local bards and tradition, a mine of information and romance regarding his beloved Rajputs, whom he identified as connected with "the Getic nations

described by Herodotus" and the Scandinavian Asi and German tribes "The heroes of Odin," he writes, "never relished a cup of mead more than the Rajpoot his *madhwa*, and the bards of Scandinavia and Rajwarra are alike eloquent in the praise of the bowl" Again "Even in the heaven of Indra, the Hindoo warriors paradise, akin to Valhalla, the Rajpoot has his cup which is served by the Apsara, the twin sister of the celestial Hebe of Scania." "Rajasthan," he explains, "is the collective and classical denomination of that portion of India which is the abode of (Rajpoot) princes In the familiar dialect of these countries it is termed *Rajwana*, but by the more refined Raet'hana, corrupted to Rajpootana, the common designation among the British to denote the Rajpoot principalities"

The Jat States of Bhurtpore and Dholpore and the Mahomedan State of Tonk have also been included for many years in Rajputana

Most of the Rhymes in these pages refer to history more or less ancient, and the ground-work of these may be found in Tod's book. For the story of two I am indebted to Powlett's *Gazetteer of Bikanir*. A few of modern cast are added by way of contrast under the head *Miscellaneous*. Should they collectively lead any English reader to take an interest in Rajasthan past and present, my object in publishing them, as a farewell tribute of friendship to the Chiefs and people of that delightful country from whom I have received much kindness, will have been accomplished.

I trust the Notes at the end will not seem too long; they are mainly extracts from Tod, and the uninitiated would do well to glance at them before reading the Rhymes they explain or illustrate. It will be seen that in some Rhymes I have imagined a local guide or bard speaking to an English traveller, in a way which to those who know the country and how difficult it is to extract



any information or sentiment from such persons, generally conspicuous by their absence, will seem indeed an effort of imagination. It is an old device, however, and may plead the sanction of usage and Sir Walter Scott

Lastly, must I ask scientific orthography to pardon colloquialisms like Oodeypore, Jeypore, Jodhpore, instead of Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, for the sake of rhyme, if for nothing else? I have followed the modern method only in spelling words which I thought would not be familiar to the English reader. Thus, though I cannot dethrone *Suttee* and *mizzer* in favour of *Sati* and *nasa*, I write Amra and Jagat where Tod wrote Umra and Juggut, herein following, with a halting step, a rule now generally accepted in English newspapers and railway time-tables published in this country as well as by the Government of India for official correspondence

The Rhymes entitled "Stepping the Boundary," "A

Petition," "Snake-Bite," "A Thakur at Home" have appeared before in a little volume called *Whiffs* published by Messrs Wheeler and Co, Calcutta and Allahabad (Indian Railway Library Series), the copyright of which belongs to me

MOUNT ABU, *September* 1894



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## MOUNT ÁBU

OLYMPUS is this hill, from ages

Unknown it has been sacred ground ,

Rishis and Múnis,<sup>1</sup> gods and sages

Dwelt in these woods and rocks around

And now perchance when earthquake rumbling

Goes muttering thro' the mountain-side,

It may be some old god a-grumbling

At want of worship, wounded pride.



Yet superstition, which by horror  
And promise long has reigned supreme,  
Brings thousands yearly to Dilwarra,  
Whose temples surely are a dream

A dream beyond all comprehension  
Of art that e'en a Goth might saint ,  
No wonder if they draw attention  
To lore and legend growing faint.

The worship of the Jain who raised them  
Has now diminished thro' the land,  
But pilgrims who have come and praised them  
Are not required to understand

The white man smiles and from a guide-book chatters  
Of Vishnu, Parasnáth, of Brahman, Jain ,  
The brown one looks on worship, faith, as matters  
Ordained for each race by a different sign.

Whether he climb to trace in cave or high nook  
The footsteps of some deity, or kneel  
Before Dilwarra's gods or those of Gae Mukh,  
Enough for him, unlettered soul, to feel,

Whoe'er in Abuji<sup>2</sup> may rule as master,  
Men of an ancient creed or men without  
The *pooja*<sup>3</sup> of his childhood and his pastor  
Is his to follow, let who may have doubt.

He hears unmoved how the Chauhan once wrested  
From the Pramars this mountain hold sublime,  
His thoughts are further back, when Vishnu crested  
Proud Guru Sikr<sup>4</sup> in the world's young prime

So the old stream of pilgrims ripples yearly,  
While some there be who stay awhile and grow  
To love the Hill and its cool breezes dearly,  
As refuge from the burning plains below

As clothed with natural, not celestial beauty—  
A home for children of the Frank, and place  
For England's soldiers when on foreign duty  
Health to renew and tired nerve to brace

To these the rocks which bear the names of *Nun*  
*And Toad, The Gates and Sunset Point*, the play  
 Of light upon the Lake from Moon and Sun  
 Are Abu's chief divinities to-day

<sup>1</sup> The *Rishis* were the great sages, seven are especially enumerated in the Puranas, among whom Viswamitra and Vasishtha are frequently mentioned in the legendary lore of Abu

*Muni* is a similar term, meaning any great sage or holy man

<sup>2</sup> The suffix *ji* denotes respect, honour. Natives generally speak of Abu as *Abuji*, and chiefs and others of less degree have always this suffix attached to their names when mentioned by their own countrymen

<sup>3</sup> Worship

<sup>4</sup> Guru Sirk, or the Guru's Pinnacle, is the loftiest peak of Abu, and about ten miles from the civil station. The shrine there has no architectural beauty. The principal objects of worship are contained in a cavern, and consist of a rock of granite bearing the impress of the feet of Data Brija, an incarnation of Vishnu, and in another corner of the cavern are the "puddaca," or footsteps of Rama Nanda, the great apostle of the Sita ascetics. There are also other caves on Guru Sirk resorted to by the numerous pilgrims to this noted shrine  
 —*Rajputana Gazetteer*.

## AJMERÉ<sup>1</sup>

SEVENTEEN centuries and a half, they say,

Have passed since Ája the Chauhan this town  
And fortress founded many a stormy day

Since then has Ajmere known on his way down  
To Somnáth Mahmud Sultán made an end,

Nearly nine hundred years ago, of all  
That Táragarh was helpless to defend

Then he who built the tank which people call  
The Bisal ságar and who Delhi took

Ruled here awhile his grandson Ána made  
The lake on which the Moghal loved to look

When Shah Jahan long after marble laid

## AJMERE

Upon its bank. From Ana sprang the last  
Chauhan who reigned at Delhi, his great name  
Of Prithi Raj still shines throughout the past,  
The topmost pinnacle of Rajput fame.

Since then what changes in seven hundred years—  
Since Safiyad Hussein, Moslem governor  
Of Taraigarh, of whom the traveller hears  
At his famed shrine, surprised by the Rahtore,  
Yielded his life and trust!

When England bled,  
Ere the third Richard gained his bloody throne,  
For York and Lancaster, White Rose and Red,  
Mewar was Ajmere's lord. It came to own  
Lordship from Malwa after, once again  
Islâm. The Rahtore for a space held sway,  
Till mighty Albar heralded long reign

Of Moghal, who had ruled perchance to-day  
 Had Aurangzeb been like him    The last century  
 Saw Toork,<sup>2</sup> Rahtore, Mahratta, each in turn  
 Snatching and keeping, till "by Heaven's decree"  
 The year which made the British bonfires burn  
 For Waterloo brought Ajmere peace and hope,  
 Safe in old England's arms

Here, Father Time,

Let me look back thro' thy kaleidoscope

Of war and slaughter, chivalry and crime,  
 Upon this scene of hill, and lake, and town  
 Nestling in lap of Táragarh, most fair,  
 And linger from its memories of renown

On four great pictures wondrous to compare

<sup>1</sup> This is the common spelling, which I have followed also in rhyming to Jesalmere, Bikanir, etc., though strictly speaking it would be correct to write and pronounce Ajmér, Jesalmér, Bikanér

<sup>2</sup> The Rajputs and others apply this word generally to all Mahomedans

# I

## AKBAR'S VOW

AKBAR the King was sad and craved a son,  
And vowed a vow that if his prayer bore fruit  
He thanks to render God would walk on foot  
To Ajmere's famous shrine. The gift was won,  
The vow fulfilled Each day the march begun  
With all the Eastern pomp of drum and flute,  
Horses and elephants and guns' salute  
Three hundred years since then their race have run  
And the old shrine hath many a pilgrim seen,  
But never since that long procession glowed  
And flashed and hummed and trumpeted hath been  
A sight like that along the Jeypore road,  
Still marked by Akbar's milestones Nor, I ween,  
Hath saint to greater pilgrim favour showed



## II

### SIR THOMAS ROE AT AJMERE

AD 1616-1618

WHEN James the First of old sent embassy  
To Ind, Great Britain's first ambassador  
Sought audience of the Moghal emperor  
Here at Ajmere, and in his Diary  
Tells, in old English, how he patiently  
"Laye" a full year, angling with goodly store  
Of gifts and compliment, while waiting for  
The firmán which, thro' humble factory  
And leave to trade, unconscious paved the way  
To Clive and Warren Hastings. Who could know,  
As by this lake Jahangir proudly lay,  
Pavilioned with Eastern pomp and show,  
The danger to the Peacock Throne that day  
He gave the firmán to Sir Thomas Roe?

### III

#### DIXON SAHIB    A D 1837-57

The name of Colonel Dixon, who ruled over Merwara from A D 1836 to 1857, and over Ajmere also for most of that period, is a household word in both districts, and his tomb at Beawur is still an object of veneration and pilgrimage

THE land he governed was almost unknown

To the great world outside it when he came ,

And when he died, tho' thousands there made moan,

England at least had never heard his name.

For twenty years untrammelled by routine,

Scarcely a white face near him, with rare art

Tanks, villages, he made    and reigned serene

Till the great Mutiny.    That broke his heart

For honour he had neither badge nor star,

But marked an epoch    people still describe

His deeds with love and wonder , near and far

They speak and date from time of "Dixon Sahib"

#### IV

### THE MAYO COLLEGE<sup>1</sup>

A D 1890

THE history of Rajwarra reeks with war ,

But since there came the long, long reign of peace  
And ordered law is growing governor,

With fruits of knowledge yielding rich increase,  
A dream was born—to bring the land's chief flower

Of Youth to love the bloom of gracious arts  
That have, or ought to have, a greater power

Than swords to force a fellowship of hearts.  
So this white hall of marble, this green park,  
And these fair houses where glad school-boys dwell

## THE MAYO COLLEGE

And play arose—a light from out the dark.

Ah, noble dream, the buds begin to swell

May summer crown thy spring, and autumn bright

Thy message long proclaim “Let there be light.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Founded at Ajmere in 1875 by the Earl of Mayo, Viceroy and Governor General of India, for the education of the chiefs and nobility of Rajputana.

<sup>2</sup> This is the motto of the College.

AT BHINAI

MADLIA BHEEL<sup>1</sup>

Two hundred feet above the plain

Upon this rock he made his nest,

And scoured the country round in vain

The wheeling squadron's frequent quest.

Nor horse nor man, nor lead nor steel,

Could hurt a hair of Madlia Bheel

That was three hundred years ago

    This hill and those on either side  
And all around them, you must know,  
    Were jungle ; thick enough to hide  
A legion   so the Bheel abode  
In safety, ravaging the road

The King had armies in the south,

    So convoys passed ; and more than one  
Was looted near that gorge's mouth

    Till news of what the Bheel had done  
And how his name inspired fear  
Reached Delhi and the Emperor's ear

My ancestor brave Karam Són

Was with the King at Delhi then,

A Jodhpore prince    He took a train,

It might be of some hundred men,

And hither came and camped a mile

From this, and planned a stroke of wile

Five seeming robbers herding kine

Strayed to the jungle's edge one night,

And sate them down to feast, with wine

'    The taste of which was rare delight

When of a sudden on their meal

Broke in the outlaw Madliā Bheel

## AT BHINAI

They hailed him for their hearts' own lord,  
Pointed toward the kine and laughed  
A welcome to their feast they poured  
Down every throat the luscious draught—  
Wine such as Bheel could never know.  
It lured them to their overthrow

For Karam Sén sharp swordsmen had  
In ambush In his drunken sleep  
He killed the Bheel The King was glad,  
And gave him all these lands to keep—  
Almost as far as sees the eye,  
And made him Raja of Bhinai



The blood of Jodhpore in my veins  
From Karam S  n of princely line,  
No village of his broad domains  
Should now own other rule than mine  
But many a one has passed away  
Alas, not half remain to-day

Lord of the Eighty-four,<sup>2</sup> the name  
My fathers bore for many a year  
Was never mine not mine the blame  
Ah, well ! you do not care to hear  
That story now , you only feel  
An interest in Madlia Bheel

This eagle's nest, this rugged peak  
Where once he lived is now my fort  
Here in the Rains I've spent a week,  
But now my breath is getting short  
For climbing, and the hill is mute,  
Save only for a chance salute

From yonder gun    The kite and crow  
Muse o'er the fortunes of the place.  
Bhinaï there peacefully below  
Lies with a smile upon her face,  
Her tanks and fields, without a thought  
Of days when Madlia reived and fought

Thus he the Raja, bright with sheen  
 Of pearls and silks of richest hue,  
 And all a peacock's pride of mien  
 I gazed upon the wide-spread view,  
 And wished that fairer stroke of steel  
 Had robbed the nest of Madlia Bheel

<sup>1</sup> This is little more than a translation in verse of the story of Madlia told me by Raja Mangal Singh, C I E, of Bhinai, while we were standing together on the top of Madlia's Hill. Alas that my good friend, a most picturesque specimen of a Rajput nobleman of the old type, who was constantly dwelling on the decadence of his dignity and possessions as compared with by-gone days, died four years afterwards in 1892.

<sup>2</sup> The *chaurāsī*, or eighty four (villages), was the old designation of the Raja's domain. Tod writes "The country was partitioned into districts, each containing from fifty to a hundred towns and villages, though sometimes exceeding that proportion. The great number of *chaurāsīs* leads to the conclusion that portions to the amount of eighty-four had been the general subdivision. Many of these yet remain tantamount to the old hundreds of our Saxon ancestry"—Tod, vol 1 p 141

AT OODEYPORE

ON THE PICHOLA LAKE

*A local guide is supposed to be addressing an Englishman  
who is in a boat fishing*

RAMA and Krishna both from Manu came

(You call him Noah but in our Purans

His name is *Varvaswata*, the Sun-born)

Thousands of years before your prophet Christ

The Solar Race from Rama, ancestor

To Méwar, Marwar, Jeypore, Bikanir ,

The Lunar, Krishna-born, holds Jesalmere,

Bhatti, Jaréja, and some other tribes

That is the answer to your question why  
Upon the ceiling of the Mayo College  
Where our young Thákurs go to pick up knowledge  
The Sun and Moon blaze out in heraldry  
A golden sun upon a crimson field  
Is Méwar's banner, and a frequent sign  
The Peacock everywhere, our bird divine  
Our tribes and customs all have been revealed  
By Tod Sahib—was there ever such a man?  
You know we are Sesodia,<sup>1</sup> that the scribes  
Make us the first of six-and-thirty tribes,  
And that we are the only Rajput clan  
Who never gave a princess to the line  
Of Timoor, against which we held our own—  
Save at Chitor, our capital of old,  
Of which a separate story shall be told—  
Since Bappa Rawal founded there his throne

AT OODEYPORE

And the old dynasty surnamed Gehlote  
Tod makes our Bappa A.D. 728,<sup>2</sup>  
And Oodeypore<sup>3</sup> from Oodey Singh to date,  
More than eight centuries later—Akbar's time  
Our history is full of deeds sublime,  
Our land of hills and forests—yes, and lakes  
Most beautiful to see the traveller makes  
Pictures of this on which we are afloat  
(’Tis named Pichola), and the Lord Sahib said  
(Lord Lansdowne fished, Sir, from this very boat)  
He never saw a more enchanting scene  
The Duke<sup>4</sup> too said so—son, Sir, of the Queen  
  
That's the Maharana's palace Yes, his rank  
Is very high, the biggest state may thank  
Its fortune when it weds with Oodeypore  
Our barons too are men of high degree—

*Thákurs*<sup>5</sup> we call them—tho' sometimes you see  
Thákurs in other parts who are no more  
Than petty squires they have a theory,  
Maintained for many a century, that while  
The Chief and they are one large family,  
He service to receive is lord and king,  
First of the brotherhood in everything,  
But cannot set aside by force or guile  
Rights in the land which their forefathers held  
The Durbars (that's the chiefs) have frequently  
Troubles with Thákurs, which, at one time quelled  
By arms, the British Government  
Now settles often they are caused or swelled  
By Brahmans whispering softly in the ear  
Of both when angry, fostering discontent  
For private purposes Their influence here  
Is strong, they are a race we all revere.

For did not Manu say a Brahman's life  
 Was worth four soldiers', eight of trading men,  
 And sixteen Sudras' ?<sup>6</sup> That is why since then  
 Meddling with Chief or Thákur or Dewan  
 They always manage to put by a bit,  
 And are so clever in creating strife  
 For other people, keeping out of it  
 Themselves, like lawyers feeding on  
 The quarrels of their clients

If you wish

To see the city, the Victoria Hall  
 And Lansdowne Hospital, I'll show you all  
 The local sights—Bravo ! you've hooked a fish

<sup>1</sup> The clan takes its name from the town Sesodia in Méwar

<sup>2</sup> See Note, p 206

<sup>3</sup> "Classically Udyapoor, the City of the East, from Udy, the point of sunrise "

<sup>4</sup> His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught visited Oodeypore in 1889, and the Marquess of Lansdowne as Viceroy in 1890



<sup>b</sup> The first syllable of this word should be pronounced as in the German *thalcr*

<sup>b</sup> As observed by Tod, the following is the climax of Manu's texts protecting the Brahman —

“What prince could gain wealth by oppressing these (Brahmans), who, if angry, could frame other worlds, and regents of worlds, and could give birth to new gods and mortals?” See Note, p 207

## AT CHITOR

### I

*A local bard is supposed to be speaking to an English  
traveller*

YOU have heard the story before—  
Padmani<sup>1</sup> the peerless, the fair,  
Who came from the cinnamon shore  
Of Ceylon, the Lunkah of yore,  
And how in Méwar we swear  
“By the sin of the sack of Chitor”?  
Three sacks and a half we count  
Of the half I will tell you first

A tale of a traitor accurst  
And of beauty ill-fated, the fount  
Of a chivalry such as the Turk  
Never showed in the days that have been,  
And of slaughter—alas for that scene!—  
God's curse upon Allah-ud-din,  
His race and their handiwork !

Her beauty all the world inspired,  
Till he, the King, by passion fired,  
Resolved to lead an army here  
And take by craft, or sword and spear,  
A robber's might, that peerless girl,  
Brave Bheemsi's <sup>2</sup> queen and Méwar's pearl  
The blood of Bappa Rawal spurned  
To yield the prize for which he burned,  
But, life to save, allowed his eyes

To look just once upon that prize  
Frankly on Rajput faith reposing,  
He came within our fortress, saw  
The mirror's face her face disclosing,  
And straight returned    So by our law  
Of trust for trust and host and guest,  
Who on each other's honour rest,  
Bheemsi descended to the plain  
To see the King take bridle rein  
There foemen set in ambuscade  
The lofty Rajput's trust betrayed  
And bore him hence with speed    The Khan,  
Perfidious like a base Pathan,  
Sent challenge that to set him free  
Padmani must his ransom be  
So, after counsel, guile with guile  
To meet, the Rajputs answer sent

The pearl thus caught by treacherous wile  
Would pass unto the monarch's tent  
Attended like a queen, and pay  
The ransom for her lord    That day  
Seven hundred covered litters bore  
Her train of handmaids from Chitor,  
Each carried by six men    Alas !  
Fate adverse saved the Emperor  
The warriors in those litters fought  
Like demons, and mowed down like grass  
The legions round him ere they sought  
The mansions of the Sun    They freed  
The Rajput chieftain, and a steed  
Whose feet were as the lightning flashing  
Carried him safely home, as crashing  
Upon that outer gate there came  
In hot pursuit a wall of flame,

A sea of steel, and hosts of hell,  
 On which our heroes clashed and fell  
 Tho' ancient bards have said that then  
 We lost perchance eight thousand men,  
 We kept brave Bheemsi and his queen  
 And beat back the false Allah-ud-din  
 'Twas some time after, months and more,  
 Before the tyrant sacked Chitor ,  
 But tho' that day we drove him back,  
 We count the slaughter half a sack <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Padmīni in Sanskrit, but commonly called Padmanī in Méwar

<sup>2</sup> According to Tod, Bheem Singh, an uncle of the Rana, was the husband of Padmanī. Another account assigns her to Ratun Singh, the Rana's brother

<sup>3</sup> Though the city was not stormed, the best and bravest were cut off (*saka*), A D 1303

## II

### THE SUTTEE OF GORAH'S WIFE

GORAH and Bádal, the Chauhans, and kin

To fair Padmani, that fierce onslaught led

Bádal, a boy, was wounded , Gorah dead,

Covered with wounds and honour, was brought in

And laid upon the pyre, while drums made din

His wife, the spirit of the Rajput glowing

Within her breast that swelled with love and pride,

Questioned the boy of how her lord had died ,

What glories crowned his coming and his going?

“Mother,” the lad replied—“as reapers reap  
The wheat so he the harvest of the battle ,  
And I who followed ’mid the noise and rattle  
Gleaned in the wake of his terrific sweep.  
Before he laid him down to rest and sleep  
He spread a carpet of the slain upon  
The gory bed of honour, made a prince  
His pillow, rested joyfully, and since  
Unto the mansions of the Sun has gone”  
“I know,” she cried—“what more? go on! go on!”  
Tell me again about my love, I pray”  
He said, “What further, mother, can I tell?  
He left no foe to dread or praise”  
“Farewell,”  
She smiled, “my lord will chide me for delay”—  
Sprang on the pyre, and with him passed away



### III

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND SACK

'Twas nigh six hundred years ago

The Fortress fell, and all our power

Was weakened by the vengeful blow

That shattered Méwar's bloom and flower

But when the Tartar seized his prey

The fruits of conquest had no taste ,

No life was there to vex or slay,

He entered on a barren waste.

The Rana with eleven sons

And all our males had fallen in fight ,

A caverned mine the ashes held

Of those who ere the Johur<sup>1</sup> rite

Were wives and daughters , all embraced

The fire, and since no light or air

Has pierced the gloom which shrouds their dust

Padmani's dust is treasured there

Bheem's palace and her rooms upon

The lake within it still were left ,

What else? The conqueror made a wreck

And coldly handed it bereft

Of all our monuments of art  
Unto a slave, the Jhalore chief  
Our Rana's one surviving son  
Nursed in the mountains' depths his grief

And while he reigned the foreign yoke  
Pressed on the land By Fate's decree  
His son to Deccan exile sent  
Was ancestor to Sivaji,

Who founded the Sattara throne  
And that at Delhi overturned,  
When Hamir was our chief the plains  
And villages laid bare and burned

By raids from mountain holds so galled

The vassal Maldeo in Chitor

He sought alliance Hamir took

His daughter unto wife and swore

By hook or crook his grandsire's rock

Should see the Standard of the Sun

Shine from it once again He kept

His oath , and when the deed was done

The Ghilji Mahmood marching down

Gave battle by the Chambal , he

Was put to rout and lodged forsooth

A prisoner in this Fort for three

Whole months    Then liberty he bought  
By a large ransom—fifty lakhs,  
With elephants , and Ranthambor,  
Ajmere, Nagore surrendered    Tax

So glorious brought homage free  
From Marwar, Jeypore, and each clan  
From Gwalior to Abuji  
Méwar was great thro' Hindusthan

What names, for jewels on her brow,  
Like Hamir, Lákha, Chonda, he  
Who built the column here to tell  
Of many a splendid victory ,

Raised forts around and temples grand

At Ábu, Sádri ; gave his name

To Kumulmer, the Rahtore spoused,

And after fifty years of fame

Was killed by his own son ? Had such

As these, and Prithi Raj the brave,

Sanga, whom even Báber feared,

Remained our citadel to save,

Bahadur Sultan had not stormed

Its walls <sup>2</sup> again in proud despair

The awful Johur had not claimed

Our dearest dear, our fairest fair

'Tis said that thirteen thousand passed

In flame, and thousands thirty-two

Of Rajput warriors of all clans

In that fierce fight were slain and slew

O strange for Báber's son to be

Our *Rákhi bhari*<sup>8</sup> in time of need !

The captor heard his horses' hoofs

And fled—would God had given them speed !

A fortnight sooner, and Chitor

Had 'scaped that second awful sack ,

For when he came a wilderness

To Bikramjeet was given back

Unworthy thou, O Bikiamjeet,  
Of Rana Sanga thy great sire,  
Who led the chiefs of Rajasthan  
And raised our banner ever higher

His name Humáyun's succour gained,  
While thine—but barbed is iron Fate  
Chitor restored, few years shall pass  
Before Humáyun's son, alas !  
Shall thunder at its gate

<sup>1</sup> The last act of a Rajput garrison in extremity was to immolate by fire all their females, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. This rite was called the Johur. See Note, p. 208

<sup>2</sup> Bahadur Shah, Sultan of Guzerat, took Chitor in A. D. 1534

<sup>3</sup> See Note, p. 211



#### IV

#### THE THIRD SACK (A D 1568) AND AFTER

MAHÁDFO<sup>1</sup> sent us Ooda    He knows best—

For what know we?    But cursèd for all time

Is Ooda's name in Méwar    his the crime

Of killing Kumbhu, whom Rajwarra blest

He snatched the throne before his time, and found

His nobles and his kindred stood afar

And shuddered    so he gave Marwar

Ajmere and Sambhur—ay, and roods of ground

Ancestral, Jodha thus to make his friend  
The Deora prince in Abu who had known  
Our yoke as vassal he let rule alone  
And e'er remorse pursued him to his end

He offered Delhi (his last gift of shame)  
A daughter for a bride. Then Heaven to save  
The house of Bappa Rawal struck the slave  
By lightning—and we never name his name

But Heaven perchance remembered Ooda's crimes  
When Guzerat avenged them on Chitor  
Yet all that sacrifice, those seas of gore,  
Sufficed not to appease in after times

The wrath of that dread Goddess who aye craved  
Princes for victims,<sup>2</sup> and from Bikramjeet  
Wrested the throne. The Bastard in his seat  
Lost it by pride, and when the *chaonwai* <sup>3</sup> waved

O'er Oodey Singh once more M'war was glad  
Ah, short-lived joy! In vain the faithful nurse  
Doomed her own child,<sup>4</sup> alas! to bring a curse  
To manhood Bappa's line had had

Its good and evil, never once before  
A coward woman's sway had bred  
Water in blood No regal victim led  
When mighty Akbar thundered on Chitor

So the great goddess hid her face—e'en tho'  
Jaimul and Patta, whom Akbar carved in stone,  
Bédla, Madária, brothers<sup>1</sup> of the throne,  
And chiefs of other clans, whose names still glow

In song, put on the saffron<sup>5</sup> for last deed  
Patta of Kélwa, boy of scarce sixteen,  
Had bride and mother, but with dauntless mien  
Each seized a lance and when his turn to lead

Came, rushed on with him, with him fought and fell  
Only for Ooda four inglorious years  
After that harvest, when the conqueror's spears  
And axes shattered this proud citadel

Which thirty thousand died to save    Thereafter,  
Its goddess fled, the wilderness you see  
Remained, and Oodey's city came to be  
Our capital.    Here every stone and rafter

Of the old ruin has a tale    Once more  
After great Pertap, Oodey's son, cast down  
And hunted, turned and brought renown,  
Reconquering all—Amra, his son, Chitor

Regained for a short space , but times soon changed  
Rajwarra tore her entrails , our own fiefs  
And vassals blossomed into minor chiefs,  
Servants of Delhi    Peace was then arranged,

And Amra's heir upon the Emperor's right  
Sat at Ajmere . our barons ranked before  
All others—but supremacy was o'er  
No longer sun, but only satellite,

The Rana Karan <sup>o</sup> took from Shah Jahan  
Leave to repair this Fort 'Twas in his time,  
While Jagat Singh was still in boyhood's prime,  
That thro' Chitor men came from Inglistan

(That Jagat Singh who built the palaces  
Jagmander, Jagnewas, upon the lake  
Pichola.) Then when Arung tried to break  
Our hearts and faith, made friends of enemies,

Ambér<sup>7</sup> and Marwar once more at our side,<sup>8</sup>  
What glory might have fallen on the land  
And made the lotus of our love expand  
Had only Rajasthan remained allied<sup>1</sup>

Thro' her own quarrels crept in the sly fox,  
Soon to become a wolf. We could not see  
How, worst of all, the race of Sivaji  
Would eat up all our goodly lands and flocks

That Chitor would look down with helpless eyes  
On the Mahratta camped beneath her walls,  
Thirsting to spoil the jewels and bright halls  
Of Oodeypore<sup>9</sup> and that his robberies<sup>10</sup>

Would last a century and leave Méwar  
 Beggared of almost all but her past fame—  
 Till the red coats and the white faces came,  
 And once again uprose her fortune's star

<sup>1</sup> The Creative Power, the Great God

<sup>2</sup> See Note, p 213

<sup>3</sup> When a chief appears in state, a *chaonwar*, or yak's tail, is waved slowly over his head by an attendant behind, and, like the umbrella, is one of the insignia of royalty

<sup>4</sup> See Note, p 217

<sup>5</sup> "When a Rajput is determined to hold out to the last in fighting, he always puts on a robe dyed in saffron"—Tod, vol 1 p 196

<sup>6</sup> See Note, p 218

<sup>7</sup> The ancient appellation of the state now called Jeypore, the city of which name was founded by the great Jey Singh in A.D 1728

<sup>8</sup> See Note, p. 218

<sup>9</sup> In A D 1768-69 Oodeypore was besieged by Sindhia for more than a year The siege was raised on Méwar paying over 60 lakhs and ceding four districts, which, though nominally only mortgaged, have never been recovered

<sup>10</sup> Tod is very eloquent on the subject of these robberies See his *Annals of Méwar* "When, in A D 1795, a marriage was negotiated between the Rana's sister and the prince of Jeipoor, the Rana was obliged to borrow £50,000 from the Mahratta commander Umbaji to purchase the nuptial presents "



## KRISHNA KUMÁRI

A.D 1805

O BEAUTIFUL as moonlight

Were her virtues and her grace,

And her fame was like the sunlight,

For the whole world praised her face

As a rose of Gulistan at

Which the wild bee honey sips,

And flower of the pomegranate

Was the blossom of her lips !

Ah ! that was Krishna, Flower of Rajasthan,  
Whom Ajit and the robber Amir Khan  
(He rose from being a common thief,  
God help us, to a ruling chief)  
Did—and we curse them in one breath  
For that foul doing—did to death  
The tale, wherever it is known,  
Must move methinks a heart of stone

A princess of the purest race,  
Her matchless form, her peerless face,  
Were sung abroad in town and camp,  
Till, like a moth unto the lamp,  
Came Jeypore, suitor for her hand ,  
And Jodhpore after made demand  
Sindhia's hard yoke was on the land,  
And he, to wound a father's heart

To slay—but quickly turned and fled  
Her virgin innocence and shield  
Of beauty suddenly revealed  
Horror of guilt that might appal  
The hardest heart so he let fall  
The dagger in his hand

But cries

For mercy, tears from mother's eyes,  
The mother who had seen the knife  
And loved her daughter more than life,  
Availed not, tho' the steel was spared,  
Women the poisoned cup prepared,  
And brought to Krishna in the name  
Of her weak father, bowed by shame,  
Amir and Ajit. Calm she drank  
And said, to soothe with love and pride  
The frantic mother at her side,

“O mother dearest, let me thank  
My father I have lived so long  
Weep not, for I have done no wrong  
Am I not your own daughter dear?  
Why death should Rajput princess fear?  
Does it not end our sorrows here?  
What joy is there to us on earth,  
Marked out for sacrifice from birth?”

The poison would not stay—tho’ thrice  
She drank, the lovely sacrifice  
Was not complete till a fourth draught,  
With opium added, had been quaffed  
She slept and quickly anguish deep  
Brought the reft mother the same sleep  
Words never told so dark a crime

As that which closed thy sixteen years

And killed thy mother in her prime

The tale is all too deep for tears,

Too sorrowful to dwell upon,

Krishna Kumari, past and gone !

## AT NÁTHDWÁRA <sup>1</sup>

SACRED to Rajasthan the place which shrines

The image of that Krishna deified

A thousand years and more—'tis said, from signs

And texts which learned persons have descried—

Before our Christ Nathdwara is its name

The image was at Mathura until,

Proscribed by Aurangzeb, 'twas saved from shame

Thro' Rana Raj, by whose protecting will

The Rajputs brought it to Méwar on wheels

Which at this spot sank deep in earth and none  
Could move them "Thus," they said, "the god reveals

His wish to dwell here." So the town begun

Maharana Bhima Singhji gave a grant,<sup>2</sup>

Thro' the chief butler, of such lands and dues  
And privileges to the hierophant

That what he asks no man may dare refuse

Pope of Rajwarra is this priest, for "he

Who doth resume that grant," men know full well  
'Tis writ, "for sixty thousand years will be,

A caterpillar in the depths of hell"

<sup>1</sup> *Dwāra* (portal), *Nāth* (god)

<sup>2</sup> For translation of this grant see Note, p 219

## THE RAHTORES<sup>1</sup>

AT JODHPORE 1890

*A local bard is supposed to be addressing an English  
traveller*

IN far Kanauj, the cradle of our race,  
God knows how many centuries it ruled,  
Till, broken and by hard misfortune schooled,  
A handful of our brave went forth to face  
The dangers of this desert, then a sheer  
Waste without tilth or township Well, 'tis near  
Seven hundred years since then and Seoji,  
And four since Jodha raised the fort you see



The mausoleums standing at Mundore,  
Our ancient capital, contain much lore  
About the fortunes of the bold Rahtore  
You may have read how, with Méwar, he strove  
Against the Moghal Baber, and had won,  
But for mean treachery, which he does not love  
Ah! that and fierce disunion have undone  
Rajwarra many a time, until the arms  
Of Britain leagued with ours dispelled alarms  
For seventy years each State has held its own  
In peace since Delhi ceased to make us groan,  
And London holds your Queen's imperial throne  
But what a power we had in Maldeo's time,  
Three centuries and a half ago!—Nagore,  
Ajmere, Serohi—ay, and many a prime  
Slice of what now is Tonk, Méwar, Jeypore  
He lorded Bika's city    Had he sent

Aid to Humáyun on his weary flight,  
The babe which first at Umerkote saw light,  
An angry mother nursing discontent,  
Had not deflowered his conquests But who knows ?  
The tide of Destiny remorseless flows.  
How could he read that babe's auspicious star  
And say, " This Akbar will invade Marwar "—<sup>2</sup>  
Or tell that ere his seven-and-thirty-year  
Dominion ceased, not only Bikanir  
Would fall away, but, many a rich prize lost,  
Over our famed *Panchranga*,<sup>3</sup> tempest-tossed,  
Would float proud Akbar's banner that his son  
Would serve the Emperor, a daughter give  
In marriage to prolong the Moghal line,  
And take from Delhi leave to rule and live—  
" King of the Desert," " Oodey Singh the Fat " ?  
Maldeo took leave from none , but after that

Times changed Rajwarra, by great Akbar's wiles  
 And her own feuds divided, grew more tame,  
 Saw fame and fortune in a conqueror's smiles,  
 Her bravest leaders banished under name  
 Of viceroys in the Deccan and elsewhere,  
 Her own blood mixed with Moghal's. Yet where'er  
 The Rahtore went his valour in the air  
 Flashed like a sword, and evermore the same.  
 Nor Malwa, Deccan, Guzerat, nor snows  
 Of Kabul, tide of luck that sank or rose,  
 Moghal, Mahratta, nor the Frenchman's <sup>1</sup> guns  
 Could chill the fire of Jodha's noble sons

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p 220

<sup>2</sup> Marwar is a corruption of Maroo war, classically Maroost'hali or Maroost'han, "the region of death" The bards frequently style it Mord'hur, which is synonymous with Maroo désa, or, when it suits their rhyme, simply Maroo Though now restricted to the country subject to the Rahtore race, its ancient and appropriate application comprehended the entire desert from the Sutlej to the ocean —Tod's *Rajasthan*

<sup>3</sup> The five coloured flag of the Rajputs

<sup>4</sup> De Bogue, Sindhia's famous general, who won his chief victories

## AMRA SINGH

THINK of Gaj Singh, his father Raja Soor,  
Amra and Jeswant his two sons those four  
Were specimens in truth of the Rahtore—  
Bad in the blood he may be, never poor.

You've heard of Amra? Fire was in his veins.  
The Deccan knew it • many a glorious fight  
Attested there the fury of his might.

But when it came his turn to hold the reins

As chief of Maroo, somehow there was fear,  
Which ended in his brother being seated  
Upon the *gadz*, and his going from here<sup>1</sup>  
Hotter than ever, ready for affray

With man or tiger    Soon there came a day  
When, careless of the Emperor, who had cheated  
His hopes, he made continual neglect  
Of service such as emperors expect  
Whereat the World's King fumed to be obeyed,  
Threatened a fine , bold Amra, unafraid,  
Replied his fortune lay in his sword-blade  
So anger filled the soul of Shah Jahan  
To take the fine he sent Salabat Khan  
With speed    the Bakshi <sup>2</sup> hurried back much faster  
With words of insult carried to his master  
  
Then Amra, summoned to a full durbar,  
Strode swiftly past each wondering *mansabdar* <sup>3</sup>  
Up to the Presence, and with one quick dart  
Buried his dagger in Salabat's heart  
The next blow nearly fell upon the King,

Who fled—a pillar marked the dagger's swing  
 And ere the Rahtore's work and life were done  
 Five Ameers sought the mansions of the Sun,  
 While his retainers, clad in saffron, drew  
 Their swords on all around and hacked and slew  
  
 Thus Amra entered Amrapura,<sup>4</sup> mad  
 With rage Champáwat and Kumpáwat, glad  
 To avenge on Moghal enemy his fate,  
 Rushed also with him thro' that city's gate  
 Last, his brave Bundi Queen, to prove her clan  
 Of Rajput womanhood not less than man,  
 Bore her lord's body from that carnage dire  
 And passed with it upon the funeral pyre

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p 222

<sup>2</sup> Pay master of the troops

<sup>3</sup> "Of the 416 *mansabdars*, or military commanders, of Akbar's empire, from leaders of 200 to 10,000 men, 47 were Rajputs, and the aggregate of their quotas amounted to 53,000 horse"—Tod, vol 1 p 153

<sup>4</sup> An immortal abode.

## AJIT SINGH

A.D 1680-1725

JESWANT was cool where Amra was aflame

A ruler needs must fence , but no one hated  
The Moghal more    Great was his martial fame,

Fighting at first for Dara the ill-fated  
By the Nerbudda, after in the south,

And last at Kabul    Aurangzeb the King,  
Who cast his arrows with a smiling mouth

And lies like honey, kept brave Jeswant Singh  
Afar from Maroo.    Forty years our Chief,

But ever viceroy in some distant clime,  
Until he died at Kabul, bowed with grief ,

His only son a martyr in life's prime  
By poison and the tyrant. "Arung's<sup>1</sup> sighs  
Ceased not while Jeswant lived," our bards have sung  
But after Jeswant *swerga*<sup>2</sup> gained, the young  
Ajit was born to him, and this, the prize  
And hope of Maroo-désh, a gallant band  
Of Rahtores bringing from that northern land,  
Was stayed at Delhi by the King's command  
"Give up the child," he said, "and you shall share  
His birthright" Faithful to their trust they made  
Reply Surrounded by a host they quaffed  
The last deep draught of opium,<sup>3</sup> and laughed  
Defiance to false Arung's fiendish craft  
The infant prince was first by stealth conveyed,  
Hid in a basket, by a Meah<sup>4</sup> true,  
Who safely passed the Moghal ambuscade.



Then the Rahtores their wives and daughters drew  
Into a room where gunpowder was laid  
The torch applied, those grim old warriors, free  
From care, sang each to other joyfully—

*Let us swim in the ocean of fight  
To the mansions of the Sun ,  
We have lived and fought in the sight  
Of our lord whose battles are done ,  
And we fear no Islamite  
Tho' he be as fifty to one*

*The star of a tyrant abhorred  
To-day may be in ascendant ,  
Shall we kneel and feast from his board,  
On his bounty be dependent ?  
We have tasted the gifts of our lord,  
And will make his salt resplendent*

*Let the music of sword and shield*

*Begin for the brave Rahtore,*

*His blood shall flow as on field*

*Of renown his fathers' before*

*Let his eyes by sleep be scaled,*

*He shall wake in Chandrapore<sup>5</sup>*

No man might look to ride thro' such a host,

But Govind<sup>6</sup> smiled Heroic Doorga Dàs

(A name for evermore our country's boast,

His virtues those of gods above surpass),

With a choice few our Jeswant's child regains,

And speeds once more towards Maroo's sandy plains

But war is all around for safety's sake

To sacred Abu Maroo's Hope they take,

And there in secret among monks, unknown

His birth, they rear him for his father's throne

But six-and-twenty years must pass of war  
 Such as was never waged in days before,  
 Thousands of Rajputs *saranga's* mansions swell,  
 And lakhs of Moslems grind their teeth in hell,  
 And Arung there the *mussoi* <sup>7</sup> of their curses  
 Receive <sup>8</sup>—ay, victories, reverses  
 Must pass in shoals ere Jodhpore once again  
 Proclaim her Ajit lord of all the plain

Did Arung dream that Jeswant's babe, concealed  
 And borne by Meah true, thro' hand of Fate  
 Which conquers all, would one day wave the shield  
 Of triumph, thundering at his palace gate—  
 Make and unmake the World's King, take Ajmere,  
 And reign from Sambhur Lake to Jesalmere?  
 Yet so it came Had Akbar lived, Chauhan,  
 Sesodia, Hára, Bhattia, Rajasthán

With all her tribes, had not combined his power  
(For it was wise) to crush, e'en for an hour.

But Arung thrust his Islam down our throats,  
Shattered our idols ;<sup>o</sup> so when Lord Ajit  
Crested the wave and sank the bigot's boats,  
He made the Rahtore's lordship so complete  
That rites of Islam not a soul might dare  
To practise, and in Maroo everywhere  
Dread silence held the Moslem's call to prayer

---

This same Ajit (the ways of Fate are deep !)  
Exiled brave Doorga Dàs, his staunchest friend ,  
And by his own son murdered in his sleep,  
His splendid reign was brought to sudden end

## EPILOGUE

'Twas Ajit's daughter given to Ferokhsir

In marriage at the Court of Delhi led,

If I may say so, to your presence here

For while the nuptials, as you may have read,

Were going on, upon the Emperor fell

A sickness, which an English doctor's skill

Soon cured, and so the marriage went off well

The Emperor, grateful, signified his will

To let the doctor name his own reward,

And he, instead of asking for a hoard

Of silver, sought a firmán for a friend

To start a factory—which in the end

Became a town, Calcutta—brought your Clive

And Warren Hastings    Thus a single hive

Of bees that looked for honey, stinging, slowly  
 Spread over Hindusthan, and merchants lowly  
 Built up the empire of your Empress Queen  
 That is how Ajit's daughter on the scene  
 Comes in

But as for Doctor Hamilton,  
 I never heard that anything was done  
 For him Clive has a statue—he has none<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the language of the bards Aurangzeb is always “Arung”

<sup>2</sup> Paradise

<sup>3</sup> This draught was the usual prelude to death or victory in fight

<sup>4</sup> A term of respect applied to a Mahomedan, imputing respectability and experience

<sup>5</sup> City of the Moon

<sup>6</sup> Krishna—the supreme deity

<sup>7</sup> A gift presented in token of homage or respect

<sup>8</sup> Aurangzeb died A D 1707

<sup>9</sup> See Note, p 222

<sup>10</sup> Tod remarks “To borrow the phraseology of the Italian historian, ‘obligations which do not admit of being fully discharged are often repaid with the coin of ingratitude’, the remains of this man rest in the churchyard of Calcutta, without even a stone to mark the spot”

## THE FOUNDING OF BIKANIR, A D 1489

*Bika, son of Jodha, addresses the Godarra and Roncah Jits*

O PATRIARCHS of the desert, ye have heard

Of Jodha and the kingdom he hath won ,

Strength of the lion, swiftness of the bird,

Hath Bika the Rahtore, brave Jodha's son

Your clans are warring, ye have suffered long,

Roneah, Godarra, I will make you strong

Ye fear your kindred Jits, ye dread the band

Of Bhattis plundering from Jesalmere—

Fear not, my arm and name shall shield your land

And cause your enemies in truth to fear

Here will I build a city, ay, and make

The wilderness to blossom for your sake

Whose is this land? The plot of Néia Jit—

And he will have my city bear his name?

Well said, my friends, his name and mine shall meet

And bring him and your country endless fame

We will set up a noble city here

On this high ground and call it Bikanir

Your rights and privileges are secure .

I guard them ever as I would mine own.

Nay, while the line of Bika shall endure,

I promise none shall e'er ascend the throne

Till ye have set the *tika*<sup>1</sup> on his brow

So, that is done Your foes are my foes now



I am your Chief ye know my destiny  
 Karniji at Deshnúk some years ago  
 Foretold,<sup>2</sup> she hath the seer's prophetic eye  
 Have I not routed Bhattis? Yea, ye know  
 What I have done, 'tis not for me to say  
 But you shall see what I will do one day

<sup>1</sup> "The unguent of royalty" See Note, p. 223

<sup>2</sup> "On reaching Deshnúk, 16 miles south of the present city of Bikanir, he paid his respects to a famous Charan woman named Karniji, who was known to be gifted with supernatural power. She said to him, "Your destiny is higher than your father's and many servants will touch your feet"—Powlett's *Gazetteer of Bikanir*

## A RAJA'S DYING BEQUEST<sup>1</sup>

BIKANIR, A D. 1611

My sons, in Akbar Badshah's reign

(May God confound him and his line !)

There was a varlet in my train

At Court to whom the King would sign

When I was present, make him sit

While I was standing, and play chess

'Twas thus he sharpened sour wit

Upon the Rajput and thro' stress

Of circumstance I had to smile

And Akbar's condescension thank

My fierce blood boiling all the while

At such an insult to my rank

So I resolved it should go hard

With that same base-born dog whose fame  
At chess had won the King's regard

"He shall pay dearly for his game  
When we get back to Bikanir,"

Methought, but somehow thro' some fate  
Unkind the fellow scented fear

(He was the Dewan of the State)  
And fled to Delhi (Those who let

The hound escape you may be sure  
My royal wrath did not forget.)

Well, there he prospered, and no lure  
Could tempt him back When Akbar died

Jahangir Badshah called me. Then  
This Karam Chand Bachawat's pride

(I hated him above all men)  
Was humbled by the hand of Death.

I saw him dying, and my tears  
Deceived his sons , but his last breath  
Revived, 'tis said, their slumbering fears  
He warned them that I wept to see  
Him dying undisgraced, and told  
Them never to return to me  
In vain my grief with theirs condoled,  
That warning stuck

Now I am dying  
All unavenged on him and his  
I charge you therefore, cease not trying  
By all the wiles of Nemesis  
To lure Bacháwats here once moire  
And when they come—good boys and true,  
Remembering that slight of yore,  
You know what I would have you do.

<sup>1</sup> Raja Rai Singh, who ruled in Bikanir from A D 1571 to A D 1611

## THE SEQUILL

Praise be to God ! I, Soor Singh  
When paying homage to the King,  
Succeeded where my father failed  
By solemn promise I prevailed  
On Karam Chand's two sons to share  
The office that their father bare

Honoured as Dewans to their side  
Bacháwats flocked and triumph cried,  
Believing that my father's son  
Rejoiced o'er ancient wrong undone  
They sunned themselves in Fortune's beam  
Two months I let them dream their dream,  
Then swooped upon them with one bound  
Four thousand soldiers hemmed them round

The day of vengeance broke at last—  
And so they met their fate, and passed

The dogs ground up their jewels, killed  
Their women—ay, and good blood spilled  
Of Rajput warriors, but not one  
Lived to behold the setting sun  
I had them in a pretty fix—  
For what can one man do 'gainst six?

Their homes laid bare, I made that place  
For evermore a black disgrace  
To Karam Chand and all his race  
'Tis peopled by the Bojaks<sup>1</sup> now  
So I fulfilled my father's vow  
Praise be to God that I his son  
Have done what he would fain have done<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jain temple sweepers

# RAJA KARAN SINGH OF BIKANIR

A D 1639-1669

## PROEM

YOU know how two guns more or less

In the case of a Raja's salute

Will lead him to ban or to bless,

And how very important to boot

Is the distance you go to receive

A Chief, and the place of his seat

And yet you may hardly believe

The story I'm going to repeat

Bikaniris still tell it with pride

To show what their Rajas could do ,

And unless their historians have lied

It is all undeniably true

Other States may say it is not,

Or set it aside with a laugh

As a joke at the end of a plot,

A comedy acted in chaff

This reading, however, is scouted

By bards who punctilio revere

And won't for a moment have flouted

The dignity of Bikanir<sup>1</sup>

*A bard of Bikanir is supposed to be speaking to an  
Englishman*

Soor Singh was great, but Karan Singh his son

Did what no man in Rajasthan has done ,

Made its proud chiefs acknowledge him as first,

Bow down to him in durbar (how they cursed ')



This was the way it came about. His sons  
Késri and Padam Singh were brave in fight,  
And when Prince Dara fought for his own right  
And lost, they were among the lucky ones  
Who won The Emperor, so people say,  
Brushed from their clothes the dust of battle—yea,  
With his own hand great honour he became  
Their friend and Karan Singh's But all the same  
The crafty Aurangzeb, religion-mad,  
Broke up the temples at our sacred places  
Benares and Brindában, led our races  
To war beyond the Indus River, had  
Contrived a scheme when on the other side  
To humble our religion and our pride,  
Our Hindusthan to bend upon her knee  
To Islam, Akbar's tolerant policy  
Reversing thus The bigot's secret plan

Was whispered to the chiefs of Rajasthan  
Their rage was like the ocean in a storm,  
Their fears were as the snows on Caucasus ,  
So to dissemble and in cunning form  
Escape the Emperor's friendship tortuous  
Seemed wise    To cross the flood were ready then  
A thousand boats and more , we sent our men  
To seize them for our crossing *first*    " But nay,"  
Cried all the Islamites (a legion they  
Beside our troops), " we cross, O friends, then you "  
That they would say this, well our Rajas knew.  
That was the trick , for when the stream so wide  
Was passed, our forces on the hither side,  
And all the boats sent back, it was agreed  
They should be broken.    Who would take the lead  
In such a task?    The assembled Rajas said,  
" O Karan Singh, your country last need dread

The tyrant's vengeance, he in truth might fear  
To plough the boundless sands of Bikanir  
Therefore be yours to do this daring deed,  
We helping, and when done let's homeward speed"  
So said, so done but Raja Karan Singh  
Named one condition—"I will do this thing  
If seated on my throne you pass to-day  
Before me, all of you, and homage pay"  
The chiefs of Rajasthan were ill content,  
But in the end they yielded their assent.  
So in durbar our prince was hailed as chief<sup>2</sup>  
We mark the story as a golden leaf  
In our State annals, and may well reply,  
When others boast, that Bikanir ranks high  
  
What did the Emperor do? You may suppose  
His wrath at finding that we had retreated

And seeing all his dark design defeated  
 'Twas told him Karan Singh was first of those  
 Who led retreat, and how that he had sent  
 The boats in pieces therefore on return  
 To Delhi was an army straightway sent  
 To march on Bikanir and slay and burn  
 Ah ! then our chief, remembering in distress  
 That piety is good and saints can bless,  
 Turned to Karniji at her Deshnúk shrine  
 And through entreaty won a grace divine  
 For lo, the army by some sudden thought  
 Of Aurangzeb's was back to Delhi brought  
 There came a summons to brave Karan Singh,  
 And scorning fear he went to face the King  
 "Let the worst fall," he said, "the Moghal's eye  
 Shall see a Rajput does not quail to die !"

In cloth of gold and jewels bright arrayed

The Badshah of the World (they called him so)  
Sat in his hall of audience    Diamonds made

The sunlight dim, but e'en that durbar's glow,  
Tho' it outshone the star beside the pole,  
Was darkened by the murder in his soul  
For he had ordered that brave Karan's life  
Should pass in durbar by the assassin's knife.

The plot was ripe , but suddenly the King  
Beheld beside their father Késri Singh  
And Padam Singh, those famous men who fought  
His battles against Dara, and the thought  
That Késri Singh had saved his life uprising  
Leapt from his lips    On which wise Karan Singh  
Exclaimed, "The victory of my lord the King  
Was due to his own piety surprising—  
He read the Koran all throughout the fight."

Whereat the Emperor changed his former spite  
(The butchers read his sign), and purposed then  
Not to destroy but use such gallant men  
So Karan Singh was spared, thro' his brave lad,  
And sent on service to Aurangabad  
And there he died long after, having founded  
The village Karanpura and surrounded  
It with pán gardens    There a temple too  
He built unto our saint Karniji, who  
Had saved and guided him all perils through

---

Saiyads in Bikanir—you ask me how

They came    'Twas Karan Singh who brought them.

First

Was one who in that tale I told just now

Revealed the Emperor's design accursed

To stamp out our religion    Him our lord  
 Granted a village free of rent and gave  
 A pice on every house ('twas good reward)  
 In Bikanir    And since the seed of brave  
 And faithful Saiyads grew    They serve us fair,  
 And are not like Mahomedans elsewhere

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p. 224, for another anecdote of punctilio also told in Powlett's *Gazetteer of Bikanir*

<sup>2</sup> In Bikanir it is stated that he was saluted as king of the jungle, and the present Maharaja's note paper bears under a device or crest the inscription, "*Jai, jungal dhar badsha*" (Triumph, king of the jungle ')

RAJA GAJ SINGH OF BIKANIR TO RAJA  
BIJEY SINGH OF JODHPORE<sup>1</sup>

AT JEYPORE, AD 1764

WE little thought, my friend, our host  
Was fooling us with elephant fights  
And fountains playing, feasts and sights  
And dancing girls    What riles me most  
Is—not the time in waiting lost  
To hear if he would send his aid  
To guard your fort against the raid  
Of those Mahrattas who are round it  
And growing much too strong—confound it<sup>1</sup>



What vexes me is this—that he,  
After recalling many a year  
Of friendship 'twixt his house and mine,  
And saying that he wished to see  
Those villages of Bikanir  
Which Ajit Singh unjustly took  
And you would rather not resign,  
Returned to me—should secretly  
Propose that you be brought to book,  
Not by persuasion, friendship's claims,  
Which no one of our kindred blames,  
But by a dungeon's walls, or worse,  
The assassin's knife    It is the curse  
Of all our houses that such tricks  
Should be so common    I refused  
To have my friend so badly used,  
On which Jeypore himself excused,

Saying he must go talk to you  
Suspecting treachery in the wind,  
At once I bade my trusty two  
Follow the crafty one behind

The rest you know , how in durbar  
He rose and was about to go—  
The signal for some sharp *tulwar*,  
Nay fifty, to divide your spine—  
When those two followers of mine  
Sprang up and caught Maharaja by  
The girdle and most courteously  
Requested him to sit and show  
Their fears were groundless But one blow  
At you and he was a dead man,  
And I his foe. He saw my plan—  
And understood it What is more,

He honoured as a chieftain can  
 The courage of the bold Rahtore <sup>2</sup>—  
 Who else had dared to stop such wrong?  
 Our bards at home shall make a song  
 That thro' the ages loud shall ring  
 In praise of Pem and Hathī Singh

But now, my friend, let us away  
 I'll see you out of this    Some day  
 This courtesy you may repay

<sup>1</sup> With reference to this and the next Rhyme, see Note, p. 225

<sup>2</sup> The Maharaja forbade any attack on them, "and Bijai Singh, at the suggestion of the two Bikanir Thakurs, withdrew, joined Gaj Singh, and they both returned to their camp, Pem Singh and Hathī Singh remaining behind to apologise and give up their swords to Madho Singh, whom they declared they honoured as their master. They readily obtained the forgiveness of Madho Singh, who permitted the two chiefs to depart on hostages being given for the performance of Gaj Singh's promise to return after seeing Bijai Singh across the boundary"—Powlett's *Gazetteer of Bikanir*

## BIJEY SINGH TO GAJ SINGH

AT NÁTHDWARA, A D ABOUT 1770

YOU were my father's friend—alas  
That on his name there rests that stain !  
E'en gifts to Brahmans are in vain  
For guilt of parricide to pass  
You know he did the deed to raise  
His brother Abhey Singh, and how  
They quarrelled—and in after days  
How Abhey tried a force to bring  
Against my sire Bakhtawar Singh,  
And would have crumpled you as well

There is no need for me to tell  
My father's friend and mine how Fate  
Has linked our fortunes, nor relate  
How his strong arm has added weight  
To mine    We have been close allies.  
And rest assured that I do prize  
The honourable aid you lent  
(Would all my friends were as well-bred !)  
That time when like a fool I went,  
Trusting to Honour's risky laws,  
And put my very foolish head  
Into the Jeypore tiger's jaws  
The poisoned robe he sent my sire  
Should have reminded me to dread  
The venom of his treacherous ire  
You got me out of that—and I,  
You will remember by-the-bye,

Gave you some villages on which  
You'd set your heart, and sent a rich  
Donation to Karniji's shrine  
At Deshnúk    That is past and gone  
Touching this question you have mooted  
I ask you, would you have me hooted?  
I see that it would make your name  
Still greater if through you Méwar  
Regained this district of Godwar  
(Though that of course is not your aim),  
And I would help you if I could  
As far as loyal ally should  
For well you know 'twixt you and me  
There is no room for jealousy  
Sprung like myself from Jodha's veins,  
No chieftain worthier maintains  
His lordship—over desert plains

As for his learning, I declare  
It makes Nathdwara's Gosain stare  
But, O my friend, recall to mind  
What I have borne through fate unkind,  
Since first we rode in that great fight  
When panic cast its fearful blight,  
As our own guns by strange mischance  
Scattered the finest cavalry  
That e'er in Maroo<sup>1</sup> carried lance  
And then a misbegotten lie,  
That I the King was low and dead,  
Like a fierce jungle fire spread,  
And so our armies broke and fled  
You know how that same luckless King,  
Charging whole squadrons thro' and thro',  
Full many a Rajput's life-blood drew  
And many a stout Mahratta slew,

Yet at the last, no succour nigh,  
Was forced (O shame !) to turn and fly,  
Fly like a bird upon the wing  
Then after that my Thakurs, all

At feud among themselves, made life  
A burden to me    Stop their brawl

I could not, save by foreign strife  
Therefore it was that Umerkote

I took, and filched from Jesalmere  
A slice—poor conquests, not a groat

Of gain my treasury to cheer  
Then one bright ray of fortune smiled

Méwar, distracted by worse hap  
Than mine of Thakurs, like a child

Placed this rich jewel in my lap  
To keep for safety.<sup>2</sup>    Safe enough

It is now, say you, please restore ?



My Thakurs are a trifle rough—

Just put that to them. What a roar

They make! I told you—live, let live

You see Godwar's not mine to give.

<sup>1</sup> The old name for Marwar—signifies death

<sup>2</sup> “This district, which was won with the title of Rana from the Purihara, prince of Mundore, before Jodpoor was built, and whose northern boundary was confirmed by the blood of the Chondawut chief in the reign of Joda, was confided by the Rana to the care of Raja Beejy Singh of Jodpoor, to prevent its resources being available to the Pretender, whose residence, Komulmer, commanded the approach to it”—Tod, vol 1 p 434

## BIJEY SINGH ON HIS DEATH-BED

A D 1794<sup>1</sup>

WHO says that victory waited on Ram Singh  
And never on my arms? Do they forget  
Tonga? We charged the Frenchman at his guns,  
Recovered all that Sindhia took from us,  
Ay, and redeemed Ajmere Was that Ram Singh  
Or I? Good God! To think that four years afterwards,  
Ajmere retaken, the Mahratta yoke  
Was heavier than ever on our necks  
Pátan and Mértá—bah! they sicken me,  
Those names Jeypore again the Kachwaha,

My father's foe and mine, secured himself,  
Even when leagued with me against De Boigne  
Alone the Rahtore galloped on those guns—  
Our ally had received his price    No wonder  
We failed    But worst of all to know our chains  
Were riveted at Mértá by a man  
Of our own clan—yes—Rahtore—spit upon  
His name for evermore—Bahadur Singh,  
The chief of Kishengurh    What next? what next?  
That breaks my heart    Why, Damraj, in whose veins  
Flowed only Rajput bravery, not blood,  
When he received my order to deliver  
Ajmere, obeyed, but saying, "Let the Southron step  
Over my body," swallowed diamond dust  
  
Alas, 'tis true the fortunes of my house  
Have darkened ever, thro' no fault of mine!

The curse, the curse—I seem to hear the bards  
Proclaiming at my mausoleum, “ Ah !  
The Kamdhuj<sup>2</sup> killed his father brave Ajit  
His mother cursed him from the funeral pyre  
Her awful ringing curse, *The murderer's bones*  
*May they not burn in Maroo*, was fulfilled,  
And dogged his son for over thirty years  
With sad misfortune ”

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p 226

<sup>2</sup> A titular appellation of the Rahtore kings which they brought from Kanauj

## AT JESALMERE<sup>1</sup>

WHO would have dreamt in such a waste of sand  
To find such art in carven work of stone?  
A castle worthy of an ancient throne,  
And this same art proclaim to all the land  
A fallen greatness Once the roving band  
Which Deoraj and Jesal called their own  
Grew to possess much territory known  
As Bikanir and Marwar since the hand  
Which grasped was cold, and evil dogged its days  
The desert tribes were always reivers bold

And fortune swayed as leaders strove to raise

The spoil a weaker gauntlet failed to hold

Yet bards resound the ancient Bhatti's praise—

The Rajput counts his lineage more than gold

Famed for its camels, Jesal's city wears

The camel's hue, one colour all around

Save the blue sky 'Tis strange the desert-bound

The love of fatherland so constant bears

That e'en the Sétt, whose interests and cares

In foreign loans and merchandise are found,

Clings to the home on his ancestral ground

And by the name *Marwar* proudly swears

It breathes to him the desert air

By chance

The desert saved this land for many a year

From the Mahratta's desolating lance

Scourged by the Moslem and by sword and spear  
Of its own factions, how the old romance  
Reddens with slaughter luckless Jesalmere !

<sup>1</sup> Tod spells the name of the founder as Jessul, and says the site of the town was pointed out by a hermit named Eesul, who stipulated that the fields to the westward of the castle should retain his name. See Note, p. 228.

## AT JEYPORE

### THE KACHWAHAS

#### *Local guide loquitur*

FROM Kush the son of Rama we derive  
Kachwa or Kachwaha our tribal name  
There is a word like that which also means  
The Tortoise, and sometimes our enemies  
Have taunted us with being slow, altho'  
They blame us too for being first to give  
A daughter to the Delhi Emperor  
In marriage: let that pass—the times  
Were evil; chiefs and leaders everywhere



Spotted the name of every tribe and state,  
And we being nearest to the Delhi throne  
Were first o'ershadowed    What of that?    The others  
Followed soon after—Méwar last of all,  
Because 'twas far and lay among the hills  
But if you come to measure chiefs, Mán Singh,  
Jey Singh, the Mirza Raja, brave Pratáp,  
Will bear comparison in arms, while none,  
Nay, not a man in Hindusthan, for science  
Could hold a candle to Siwai Jey Singh  
(*Siwai*, or one-and-quarter, was a title  
Given to mark that he was head and shoulders  
Above the common run of chiefs and men)  
Ambér had been our capital for seven  
Long centuries since Hamaji had driven  
The Minas from it, but Siwai Jey Singh  
Founded and named this city with broad streets

And room to spread in Seventeen Twenty-eight.  
So Ambér was deserted—the old place  
Slowly has crumbled to a lovely ruin  
Delightful to the tourist    Ah! Jey Singh  
Was a great man, the Euclid of his day,  
Versed in astronomy, observatories  
He made in other cities besides this  
Science, the parent of ingenious arts,  
Found, if not pupil, patron wise, sagacious,  
In our last chief Ram Singh, who left a name  
For help to learning, art, and making laws,  
For being liberal to the cultivator  
In time of famine, which the present chief  
Maharaja Madho Singh will not let die  
Look round and see our College, streets with water  
Laid on from taps, gas-lighted, see our gardens  
And Albert Hall which Colonel Jacob built,

And ask him (for he has been twenty years  
Our architect and engineer, bestowing  
Blessing around in various ways and making  
His name a household word throughout the state),  
Ask Dr Hendley, the authority  
On Indian Art, when you have seen the Mayo  
Hospital, the museum he created,  
And other institutions in the town,  
If we deserve the name of Tortoise. Ha !  
'Tis a good joke—the State which spends the most  
And has the greatest revenue, is first  
In education—but I will not boast  
The Rajputs everywhere are brave and strong,  
And all of us should use our strength for peace  
And fruits of peace Sir, that is our endeavour

## INFANTICIDE

THE outer world and its fast-changing ways  
Is scarce a theme the Rajput loves to praise  
But is there left a man of sword and spear,  
Who ties his beard and whisker round each ear,  
So wedded to the ancient beaten track  
As to desire the days of Suttee back?  
Widows there may be, even children, so  
Encompassed by a lifelong doom of woe  
That to them stricken the old funeral pyre  
Seems mercy thro' its swift release by fire,  
But the strong hand that quenched the death of flame  
Is revered throughout the land, and shame

Now clings to relics of a country's pride—  
What relic worse than girl-infanticide ?

The Rajput may not marry in his clan  
A daughter's dower has ruined many a man  
*Chdians*, or bards, who came to bless or ban  
At every marriage feast, than locusts worse,  
Beggared the simpletons who feared their curse<sup>1</sup>  
And all were simple, Custom held them down—  
Custom, the king who laughs at every crown  
Infanticide was heir to that same king,  
And had been conquered by Siwai Jey Singh  
Had all the States of Rajasthan agreed  
To join the crusade that he tried to lead  
But no, a chief would bear a lifelong load  
For Cháran's praise—it might be one brief ode—  
And so to pay for marriage song and mirth

The little girls were smothered at their birth  
Jey Singh was wise and counselled a decree  
That none should spend on marriage feast and fee  
More than his income for a single year ,  
But old Rajwarra wisdom would not hear,  
Or dared not, till, infanticide made crime  
By<sup>1</sup> English rule, slow-educating time  
And hard experience brought the lesson home  
That erst unheeded many a stately home  
Had marred     An English ruler found  
Seven years ago an hour when men around  
Were willing to unite and shake the throne  
Of that old custom which had made them groan  
So the society which bears the name  
Of Colonel Walter <sup>2</sup> rose, and has done more  
Than Jey Singh ever dreamed of , but his aim  
Deserves to be linked with it evermore.

## AFTER-THOUGHT

Is it a judgment for the crime that wide  
Spread the dark guilt of girl-infanticide  
That even now for Rajput chief 'tis rare  
To be succeeded by a lineal heir?  
Look round—how many a throne is filled by one  
Adopted, not begotten, as a son!

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p. 229

<sup>2</sup> This society, known as the Walterkrit Rajputra Hitkarini Sabha, founded in A.D. 1888 when Colonel Walter was Governor General's Agent in Rajputana, has framed, and is successfully working, with the general consent of all the States, rules whose object is to prevent marriages between Rajputs of immature age, and to restrict expenditure on marriages and funerals, which used to be ruinous

## IN SHEKHAWATI

HERE where the sand is deep a hardy breed  
Of men and horses range , 'tis Bikanir  
Or Marwar in the face, Jeypore in name,  
And tributary to the capital  
Of gas and water pipes, in sharp contrast.  
Nor loves the brave Shekháwat to recall  
That tribute , often he remembers how  
A younger son of Ambér, given this land  
In appanage and yearning for a son,  
Was comforted by prophecy of saint,  
A holy man of Islam, Sheikh Burhán—



Which, all fulfilled, gave birth to Sheikhji (named  
After the saint) who founded empire free  
From yoke of any chief of his own clan  
Nearly five hundred years have passed since then  
And Sheikhji's sons, by cleavage of home feud  
Continual, lost the lordship that forsakes  
The house divided, ere the locust-swarm  
Of fierce Mahrattas pillaging around  
In the last century laid waste their land,  
And left them subject to their suzerain  
In name and truth. This, when the old blood stirs,  
Is all forgotten like a vanished dream  
Too many chiefs the blight that nipped the flower  
Of former greatness, manifest the seeds  
Of weakness in the custom that divides  
To every son his father's land in shares  
Equal Each country has its own fixed ways,

But by this Shekhawati surely forged  
Her own subjection, tho' they say 'twas Fate  
  
That Sheikh Burhán should have a shrine, be held  
In veneration, that his progeny  
Is numerous and well dowered, is not strange.  
But that these Rajputs carry reverence  
So far that every man-child born to them  
Wears for two years in infancy the garb,  
Or emblem of the garb of Musalman,  
And that they should abjure the flesh of hog,  
Which other Rajputs love and hold it duty  
To eat of once a year—is that not strange?

## BUNDI

RAO RAJA SURJAN SINGH OF BUNDI AT BENARES

ABOUT A.D. 1586

I HEARD a voice last night when sleep refused

Its opiate, and it said reproachingly

*Rao Surjan, head of the brave Hara clan*

*Which sprang from the Chauhan who held Ajmere*

*And with it Ranthambor for centuries*

*Till the great fortress passed unto Mewar*

*Rao Surjan, son of Arjan, who put on*

*The saffron at Chitor and glorified*

*The name of Bundi—his departure, bards*

*Have sung, the world amazed beheld    Rao Surjan*

*Holding in trust for Méwar Ranthambor  
Betrayed his trust, bribed by the Emperor  
Sáwant the Hara and a virtuous few  
Scorning to yield set up a pillar graved  
With curse on Hara prince who should ascend  
And quit the castle after with his life,  
And then died fighting From that day hath been  
Silence between Méwar and Bundi • now  
The Hara when he passes turns away  
His face from Ranthambor lest he behold  
A monument of shame Was it for this  
Rao Surjan bought the name Rao Raja ?*

Nay,

Just think—the Raja Mán Singh of Ambér,  
When Akbar's army lay around below  
The fortress, came to visit me attended  
By a mace-bearer who, seen thro' disguise,

Was Akbar straightway was a *gadi* laid,  
Whereat the Emperor spake, and Raja Mán  
Counselled surrender in return for gifts  
I thought of him my sire who at Chitor  
Fell fighting—thought and spurned again  
The memory of Rana Ratna slaying  
My ancestor his host by treachery  
Came and I wavered finally it seemed  
I could ennoble Bundi and my clansmen  
Most, the great Emperor being in my hands,  
By wringing much advantage. Yes, I know  
He promised government of territory  
Large, but my heirs will reap the benefit  
Of more than the Rao Raja then conferred  
I stipulated that no Bundi chief  
Should give a princess to the Delhi throne,  
Should pay the poll-tax, serve beyond the Indus,

That Bundi vassals should not be required  
To send their wives or female relatives  
At the *Naorosa* festival abhorred  
To the imperial palace, and when summoned  
Unto the hall of audience should enter  
Armed at all points their sacred edifices  
Should be respected, service when exacted  
Should place them under no Hindu commander  
Their horses should not bear the imperial brand,  
That they should beat their kettle-drums in Delhi  
As far as *Lal Darwaza*, the Red Gate,  
And should not *kowtow* entering The Presence,  
That Bundi should be evermore to Haras  
Their capital, as Delhi to the Emperor  
Also he gave me residence at Kasi,<sup>1</sup>  
With right of sanctuary in our holy city  
Were these not gifts to Bundi—lacking salt

To me perhaps who bought them by unfaith ?  
But have I not wiped out the evil from them ?  
Did I not win such victory for the King  
That he, without petition, bade me take  
Benares and Chunar and rule them well ?  
Have I not purged this district of dacoits  
And banished thieves from villages and towns ?  
Have I not prayed and built and beautified ?  
Here in this city public edifices  
Fourscore, and four-and-twenty baths besides  
Proclaim my zeal , while my benevolence  
Pilgrims from every quarter laud 'Tis true,  
'Tis true—but yet in spite of all these things  
Would God it had been some one else not I  
Who gave up Ranthambor !<sup>2</sup> That deed hath cost  
Much feed of Brahmans, yet it pricks me still.

<sup>1</sup> Benares<sup>2</sup> See Note, p 230

# THE DISCROWNING OF UMÉD SINGH<sup>1</sup>

A D 1771

MY image upon the pyre

Hath burned with the hair of my son,

And as tho' I had passed thro' the fire

The twelve days mourning are done.

Thus Uméda the chief of the Haras

Resigns what his sword had won



Two hundred years, as ye know,  
Have passed since Jahangir the King  
At our greatness struck the first blow,  
When he gave unto Madho Singh  
Our Kotah, the pride of the Chambal,  
By way of thank-offering

For Haras divided he knew  
Would never be strong the old tree  
Lost sap as her torn branches grew,  
We fought our own kinsmen, and we  
Had not only Moghal for suzerain  
But Ambér for enemy

Ye know how hard was his yoke ,  
My father in exile did die  
'Twas fourteen years ere I broke  
The usurper and forced him to fly  
Ah ' the price that I paid the Mahratta,  
It hath cost me many a sigh.

And still the thought of those years  
My bosom with anger fills ,  
Like a queen enslaved and in tears,  
Oppressed by a thousand ills,  
Lay our Bundi, queen and a widow,  
Enthroned in her beautiful hills

The tale of Hanja my steed,  
Whose statue stands in the square,  
Ye know, and how in that need,  
Tho' I spoke the traitor fair,  
My vassal of Indergarh rebelled  
And bade me depart elsewhere

I was only a boy at the time,  
And when I recovered my own  
Was content to forget his crime—  
Almost, till eight years had flown,  
When the coward recalled it by throwing  
At the name of my sister a stone

So the bride I offered Jeypore  
Was refused, and after I learned  
His taunt was the seed of our war  
When the cocoa-nut was returned  
Then I vowed on the cur and his litter  
The vengeance methought he had earned

I invited them, sire and son  
And grandson, to meet me one day,  
And slaughtered them every one  
At a stroke    My friends, do you say  
'Twas a treacherous act?    Yea, I know it.  
For the soul of Uméda pray

Fifteen years have I ruled

Since the life of those men was shed ,  
The hot blood of youth hath cooled,  
And ye, O my people, have said  
That I loved you, and Bundi hath prospered—  
Ah ! but the thought of those dead,

The guilt of that deed, hath been  
My spectre and constant guest,  
Hath come in the night between  
My head and the pillow it pressed ,  
And therefore this present discrowning,  
I seek by penance for rest.

So the bride I offered Jeypore  
Was refused, and after I learned  
His taunt was the seed of our war  
When the cocoa-nut was returned  
Then I vowed on the cur and his litter  
The vengeance methought he had earned

I invited them, sire and son  
And grandson, to meet me one day,  
And slaughtered them every one  
At a stroke    My friends, do you say  
'Twas a treacherous act?    Yea, I know it  
For the soul of Uméda pray.

## KOTAH AND JHÁLAWÁR

NEARLY three centuries and a half ago

This land, once held by Bheels, then Bundi's fief,

Was given by Shah Jahan to its first chief

Rao Madho Singh , and spite of many a blow

From warring kinsmen, siege from proud Ambér

And the Mahratta, stoutly held its own

The bard still sings how Zalim saved the throne

When the brave Haras stood and fought in square

Close to Bhatwarra , and again ten years  
After that battle, when he turned aside  
The hordes of Holkar, spreading far and wide,  
By skilful payment     Yet what groans and tears

Came through the hand that saved, and held in thrall  
For sixty years his sovereign and his race,  
Spread corn and wealth upon the country's face  
To feed his power, protected her from all

Dominion save his own !     Zalim, the bold,  
The handsome, famed for wisdom, wit,  
Soldier and statesman, matchless hypocrite,  
Nestor of Rajasthán when blind and old—



The Jhála's pride and Hára's curse   whom Fate  
After his death, to Hara's endless moan,  
Bequeathed a kingdom <sup>1</sup> near his fort Gágrone,  
Reft, as was Kotah, from the parent state

<sup>1</sup> The treaty made by Kotah through Zalim Singh with the British Government provided that he and his heirs should retain the administration of the State under the Chief. This stipulation was cancelled in 1838, Jhalawar, a part of Kotah, being formed into a separate State, the Chief of which must be a descendant of Zalim Singh

## ZÁLIM SINGH

A D 1818

WHAT will they say of the Jhála, the young Foujdar who  
became

King of the country he served in all but the empty name,  
Who bowed the pride of the Háras, was unequalled in  
Rajasthan?

Will they call him only a robber and class him with  
Amir Khan?

From the day I fought against Ambér and held the  
Mahratta in fee

To the time when the British power spread over the land  
like a sea

'Twas a soldier's fortune to hold what his sword had won  
by guile,

The part of a statesman to meet his enemy's wile by wile.

The man who must see behind as well as in front, and  
sleep

At night in an iron cage, why, his thoughts must needs  
lie deep ,

To trust in the faith of another is like pouring water on  
sand

How could I thus unravel the plots I have held in my  
hand ?

Cruel no doubt they will call me, the hot turmoil of  
strife

Has made me value but lightly a Thakur's or peasant's  
life ;

Nay, my own have I risked as boldly—it is all a game  
of chess,

Where the winner cares but little if the loser blame or  
bless

Would my star have mounted higher when I fought for  
Oodeypore

Had the Rajput only driven the Mahratta from her  
door ?

But he broke us, I was wounded, a prisoner—all was  
lost.

So I turned again to Kotah, to the Chief whom I had  
crossed.

Crossed in love—well, he forgave me. I rose to power  
and fame,

To the terror of all moneyed men, who would not play  
my game.

For I eased them of their plunder but ask the ryot  
now

Who made the land a cornfield and multiplied the  
plough?

Who, when other States were crumbling, kept this one  
safe and sound,

Had friends and spies in the councils of the Durbars all  
around—

When the cut-throat English soldiers were cursed by  
many a Court

Foresaw that tide of conquest, and steered this ship to  
port?

These eyes are blind to the sunlight, and face of friend  
and foe,

Eighty years have chilled and darkened the spirit's fire  
and glow,

But the old man's mind is steady, tho' thin and cold in  
his veins

The blood that careered at twenty like a river after the  
rains

See, there is the English treaty, signed, sealed, beyond a  
doubt

It gives me a written charter for all I had without,  
And which I might have lost, the power and name of  
regent—nay,

It leaves to my heirs the regency for many a coming  
day

Will they hold it? Only God knows. I kept my seat by  
force,

And always said a Rajput's throne was on the back of his  
horse

But times are changing, after I am gone there will be  
then

Some value in a sunnud from this new imperial pen.

All the Durbars of Rajwarra will now be coming in  
To join the English redcoats, because they are strong  
and will win

They seek not to topple over thrones, or to look  
behind

The rights of the men in power, they guarantee what  
they find.

What with Moghal and Mahratta, two grindstones grind-  
ing small,

Rajasthan has swayed and tottered, like a man about to  
fall ,

Every day a new marauder lifts his head and beats his  
drums ;

Peace, with one strong arm protecting, will be welcome  
when it comes

My son may see it, but often I think 'will he manage to  
guide this State ?'

Well, I've done my best, and must leave the rest in the  
hand of inscrutable Fate.

One thing I know, I have ruled this land far better than  
any king

And men will say the same some day who now curse  
Zalim Singh



## AT BHURTPORE

### THE JÁTS<sup>1</sup>

*Local guide loquitur*

THE Rajput's lineage veiled in cloud

May be of longer date than ours—

God knows what mysteries enshroud

The pedigrees of ruling powers

Enough for us that Jats can claim

An ancient history and have made

Here and in Punjab such a name

That none of us need be afraid

To wear it, whether war or peace

Whence came the Sikhs and Ranjit Singh?

Bhurtpore began to make increase

When Suraj Mal was chief and king  
He built this fort—how long ago?

A century and a half perchance  
'Tis not Chitor, with all the glow  
Of ancient glory and romance ,  
Its fame is modern—ninety years

Or less since General Lake was here  
And stormed in vain, tho' prudent fears  
Led to surrender that same year.

Four months had Ranjit bravely held

These walls , the British loss was great ,  
But all their foes were being quelled,

And Ranjit wished to save his State  
Lord Lake was strong, had taken Deeg

Holkar, who then was in this Fort  
A refugee—with whom in league

We thought to cut the redcoats short—  
Saw that the game was up · so peace  
Was made and has remained, save when  
Hot Durjan Sal by force took lease  
Of fort and *gadi*. Then again  
The redcoats came in Twenty-Six,  
Stormed, and set up the rightful heir  
Bhurtpore has had no politics  
Since then , but fearful grief and care  
Fell on us when the blood-red waves  
Of mutiny in Fifty-Seven  
Surged round and thro' and no one knew  
Where next would work the deadly leaven  
Our chief a boy, those round him stood  
Faithful to British salt and wise ,  
This Fort the men of fire and blood  
From Neemuch would have made their prize

But for the Durbar    Muttra near,

Agra, the North-West, all in flame,

Had Rajasthan rebelled that year—

Were all of us quite free from blame?

Ask Kotah—foolish men will be

In every State, your records show

We let the lawless soldiery

Go by and fought them too as foe

Did we remember Najaf Khan

A hundred years or so before,

And Sindhia later? Rajasthan

Remembered, yet in such uproar

When men see blood and hear strange cries

'Tis hard to sunder right from wrong,

Wisdom from folly's swift surprise

The British raj had lasted long

And was asleep, they said—not one

White soldier near <sup>2</sup> the prophecy  
That told the hundred years were done  
Since Panipat when it should die  
Had spread—thank God, we chose aright  
Now in Bhurtpore you may review  
Troops kept for distant frontier fight.  
Jodhpore and Jeypore, Ulwar too  
And Bikanir, such troops maintain  
Or transport. You should see our Chief  
Move cavalry upon the plain  
He knows the drill-book, every leaf<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p 234.

<sup>2</sup> See Note, p 236

<sup>3</sup> The Chief here referred to, Maharaja Jeswant Singh, G C S I, died in December 1893

## ULWAR,<sup>1</sup> 1892

GARDENS and groves of orange, avenues

Of shady trees , a city at the base

Of a steep rock-bound, fort-crowned hill , bright hues

Of flowers and varied tillage , many a trace

Of Western thought in disciplined array

Of troops, schools, hospitals , while all the East

Breathes in the palace of a bygone day,

Which travellers praise and where they love to feast

Their eyes on pearls and books of ancient date

And curious arms    These, with a fertile soil

And hardy race, are Ulwar—modern State,

Twelve decades old , in ancient times the spoil

Of Moslem from the Rajput, till their creed

Mixed with the Jadu's blood—a hybrid strain

Báber and Akbar, Aurangzeb, thro' greed

Of power came here and conquered then again

The Ját from Bhurtpore raided fifty years ,

Till the Narukas, sprung from Jeypore, seized

The helm which now their fifth chief calmly steers,

Peace on the wave, and tumult all appeased

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p 236

## AMIR KHAN'S SOLILOQUY

AT TONK, AD 1818

THEY talk of their lineage old, these Chiefs of the Sun  
and Moon,

And of me as a robber bold who founded a throne by  
crime ,

Let them hurl hard names as they please, my sons and  
the world will soon

Forget how the robber rose , it is only a question of  
time



Their Rama and Krishna, methinks, if they ever existed,  
were thieves,

Like Bappa and Jodha and all the strongest men who  
have made

Kingdoms, the kingdoms of earth, what are they but  
golden sheaves

To be bound by the men who have reaped, whose will  
is to be obeyed ?

Holkar and Sindhia were not so squeamish as these old  
kings,

I served them well and they paid the labourer worthy  
of hire

Did I serve Jeypore when he paid ? Did I break the  
seal and strings

Of an oath when my guns spoke false as they raked  
an ally with fire ?

Jeypore perhaps may complain—that is one of my present  
griefs ,

Let it pass as an old mistake, and that of the same  
false guns

Which blundered the day at Nagore when forty of  
Marwar's chiefs,

Who came to feast at my tents as friends, made room  
for their sons

Is there nothing more to regret? The cowards say that  
I slew

The girl they poisoned between them ,<sup>1</sup> they laid her  
death at my door

Because I bullied the chief whose blood is bluest of  
blue

For a fee from that Raja Mán, the oily demon  
Rahtore

Naught else? Nay, how should a man who held the  
Rajput in thrall,

And who started in life with only the sword of a bold  
Pathan,

Stickle at trifles to win, or even remember all

The blood that was shed as he fought in Malwa and  
Rajasthan?

Why doth the brain that steeled break silence kept till  
to-day

With thoughts like these of a womanish hue? I am  
lord and king,

Have washed my hands and am clean from the blood and  
smoke of the fray—

And shall I begin to fear the prick of a conscience-  
sting?

Nay, 'tis only the whisper of things I fancy them saying  
abroad

My brother chiefs—they will wince at that name, for  
me 'tis enough

To have carved my way to a throne by the edge of a  
fearless sword

Conscience? A soldier like me is made of a sterner  
stuff

<sup>1</sup> See Rhyme on Krishna Kumari, page 53



# MISCELLANEOUS



## LATEST ANECDOTE OF BIJEY SINGH OF MARWAR

The latest anecdote of Raja Bijey Singh of Marwar is contributed by the Jodhpore Administration Report for 1887-88, which says that he, "being himself a zealous Vishnav, strictly prohibited the manufacture and sale of liquor throughout the country, and that the prohibition remained in force in letter and spirit during a full period of twenty years. The Thakur of Ahwa, named Jét Singh, who had acted in opposition to these prohibitions, was seized and executed in the fort of Jodhpur on pretence of this very offence, though there existed a grudge against him on account of his unbearable insolence and defiance to the authority of the chief. The place, situated outside the 'Singoria Gate' of the city of Jodhpur, where the Thakur's corpse was burnt, is still worshipped by the Jodhpur *Lalals* (liquor sellers), who consider the Thakur as a hero and martyr who sacrificed his life for their cause."

### COURTIERS

DIDST thou, O King, an edict frame and seal  
That whoso brews or sells distillèd liquor  
Shall straightway perish for his country's weal  
To make and keep it sober all the quicker?



## KING

'Tis true , and from that question I may guess

To loosen some one's head is now your notion,  
Relying on the fact that I profess

To sect of Vishnu the most strict devotion.  
Still I may pardon if need be, why not?

A case may call for reconsideration

## COURTIERS

The Ahwa Thakur is the culprit.

## KING

What !

Jét Singh? This saves a lot of botheration  
The beast hath long authority defied—

## COURTIERS

We thought the news would very likely please thee.

## KING

My royal edict can't be set aside.

O holy Vishnu, thus do I appease thee !

Jét Singh is beheaded, and sainted as a martyr a hundred years after by the Jodhpur vintners, for whom the following elegy may serve —

Thou wert murdered, brave Jét Singh,

By a water-drinking King

Does he know that beef and beer

Brought the British soldier here?

Whisky too he drinks no end,

Does the Englishman our friend,

Who our enemies did scatter,

Conquered Moghal and Mahratta

Water never did nor can

Suit a Rajput nobleman

Therefore, Thakur, didst thou die

In the cause of Liberty

Liberty to tipple when

You like belongs to all free men

“Rightly struggling to be free,”

Thee we praise, we honour thee.  
Yes, to honour thee we come,  
Martyr for our Indian rum,  
Which the soldier in the barrack  
Calleth by the name of arrack<sup>1</sup>  
And to denizens of Maroo  
Generally is known as *dhatoo*,  
Ages long it has been made,  
Hot and strong, it's good for trade,  
And if opium were not grown  
We should each a fortune own.  
So to worship thee we come,  
Martyr for our Indian rum<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arak*, essence

## THE ULWAR TRIAL

Kunj Behari Lal, a member of the Ulwar State Council, while driving in his carriage on a public road in Ulwar, on the 21st May 1892, was attacked by a party of men, and despatched by swords. The Maharaja having died suddenly at Nuni Tal the day after, the inquiry into the murder was conducted by the British Government, with the result that four men were convicted by a court composed of two English officers lent to the State. The court found that the murder had been authorised by the Maharaja, and was planned by his right hand man and staff officer, Major Ram Chander, who, by means of pressure, had induced the others to accomplish it. Akhey Singh, who, with Ram Chander, was sentenced to death, openly confessed as to the part he and his associates had taken, instigated thereto by Ram Chander and believing the murder had been commanded by the Raj (Maharaja). The following lines reflect bazaar comment in Rajputana after the trial.

If the Raj had only lived, father,

Where would have been the crime?

Most would have said, "Good riddance,

And not before it was time",

For the man had risen too fast, father,  
And had few friends in the place  
Alas, it was hard for the Raj to die,  
And leave this sad disgrace !

To kill on a public road, father,  
Was bad—the best men make  
(As the ancient proverb hath it)  
At times, you know, a mistake.  
Ram Chander lost his sense, father  
But it seems a terrible thing  
For doing the Raj's own command  
To hang poor Akhey Singh

And Buddha to *Kāla Pān* <sup>1</sup>  
For life , seven years of jail  
To Chandra the son of Chajju—  
Alas for the women who wail !

The dead man was not their rival  
Ram Chander's only—beside,  
Just think, not one would have suffered  
If the Raj had never died !

You say the Sirkar<sup>2</sup> says, father,  
No Raj has power to kill,  
But we know they have always done it,  
And some will do it still

\*            \*            ~            \*            \*

This case will make them fear, boy,  
And save some lives    our eyes  
Are blind, our weak hearts tremble  
The big Sirkar is wise

<sup>1</sup> The common name for transportation across the sea or *black water*

<sup>2</sup> The British Government is known as the Sirkar, and the Chief of a State as the Raj or the Durbar

## THE BAORI'S REQUEST

“ Moghias (or Baoris) invariably select moonless nights for the commission of their crimes , and in this connection a native official lately informed me that he was present in Court when a Moghla was sentenced to a heavy fine, and actually heard the prisoner beg for permission that payment might be deferred until the nights grew dark ! ”—*Extract from Report of the Superintendent of Moghias in Rajputana and Central India for 1893*

O FOR a land where the Baori  
Has plenty to eat and to do !  
Nowadays not a single *corvée*  
Can he raise without hullabaloo  
Time was that the Sétts when we raided  
Were quick with the melting pot,  
And the Raj and its Thakurs aided  
If pursuit were getting hot

It paid them well and they fenced us  
From harm in some ancient keep ,  
But the Sirkar went against us,  
And now it's little we reap  
There used to be lots for the scrambling  
When a line of camels showed,  
Or a fat Mahajan was ambling,  
At night on a lonely road  
  
But the dear old days have departed,  
The merry old times are gone ,  
No wonder a chap's down-hearted  
When he's always "downed upon"  
These jails are enough to stifle  
Men used to the jungle free ,  
And it's hard to be fined for a tiffle  
That wasn't worth a rupee



They have spoilt the taste and flavour

Of life, these wretched police—

I ask your Honour a favour

If you let me go in peace

The fine shall be paid like rent, Sir,

On the day it is due all right—

But I hope you will kindly consent, Sir,

To wait till a moonless night

## STEPPING THE BOUNDARY

IN days when laws and people  
Were primitive yet wise,  
When villagers disputed  
O'er doubtful boundaries,  
The Rajput and the Bheel alike  
Would choose a trusted man,  
A grey-beard generally, who knew  
How every field began

How here was waste till such an one

Reclaimed it , there a well,

Or watercourse, was made by A

(His grandsire used to tell) ,

B sowed this land for twenty years ,

That patch belonged to C

The Grey-beard would be sure to know

The boundary's history

If only he would speak the truth,

On which they trusted solely ,

For he would carry in his hand

A little water holy,

And on his head a wild beast's skin,

Or goat's, to show that he

If perjured of his oath a beast

In the next world would be

Thus fitted out, and solemnly

Adjured by every god,

Before the assembled multitude

The boundary he trod

And where he stept the line was marked,

And all men were content

To follow till the trace grew faint

That boundary settlement

Some churl perhaps when Grey-beard died,

Some soured churl might say,

"A jackal that I heard last night

Howling in search of prey

Reminded me of Grey-beard's voice

I always feared he'd rue

Thro' holy Gunga's wrath the day

He cut my field in two"

But those who know the people well  
Aver the country-side  
Is thoroughly convinced and sure  
That Grey-beard never lied .  
And modern forms of settlement,  
So seldom understood,  
Are not, they think, as honest or  
In fact one half as good.

Yet all agree the stepping mode  
Is out of date, because  
Of new inventions—railways, schools,  
Piece-goods, vakeels and laws,  
And fifty other things that since  
It flourished have occurred—  
To prove that as men "civilise"  
You cannot trust their word

## A BHEEL DISPUTE

MLWAR, 1891

*The local manager advises*

THE Bheels are out in Sigrí—

They're shouting in the name  
Of Justice ; and in Mádrí

The Bheels are all aflame  
For the Sigrí men say Mádrí

Has cheated them of land  
A boundary dispute, you know,  
Is hard to understand

And generally among the Bheels

It leads to blood and riot.

This one both villages agreed

To settle by panchayat

Who took a man from each and made

Them swear by gods divine,

Hand clasped in hand, impartially

To step the boundary line

And so they stept it. Sigrī swears

That sixty beegahs, sown

By them for twenty years, have now

Been into Madri thrown

Their man, they say, was small and weak,

And Madri's big and strong,

The big man took the line he liked,

And forced the weak along

They also say the *panch*<sup>1</sup> was bad,  
Or prejudiced, or bought,  
And would not listen to their pleas  
Or make the inquiry sought  
As far as I can judge, the tale  
That Sigrī tells is true,  
But, true or false, the question is,  
What is the Raj to do?

The Sahib has said both sides agreed  
To arbitration—yes  
Therefore the *panch* must be upheld  
That's not so clear, I guess  
The Bheels are out, the *kilkie*'s<sup>2</sup> raised  
And therefore I'm afraid  
The *status quo* must be restored  
And fresh inquiry made

<sup>1</sup> The usual abbreviation of *panchayat*, a court of arbitration originally consisting of five (*panch*) members

<sup>2</sup> War cry of the Bheels



## A PETITION

IN the restless days of yore, in  
The time my father was a lad,  
Lony Ochter<sup>1</sup> Sahib came warring,  
Built the station Nascerbad ,  
Formed a regiment of Rasála  
At Rampura with it came  
Mahmood Khan from near Ambála—  
That, Sir, was my father's name

You must know before their coming  
There had been a lot of trouble,  
Half the country round was drumming  
Unto arms, and playing double.  
Some were secretly inciting ,  
But the brave Rasála showed  
What Pathans can do in fighting  
Through the district straight they rode  
  
Lony Ochter Sahib soon scattered  
All his enemies afar ,  
Mahmood Khan was wounded, battered,  
And promoted Rasaldar ,'  
Given a jagír in this village,  
Which he founded, where I dwell,  
Peaceably engaged in tillage,  
As my neighbours all can tell

This, my son, is the Patwari,

He was taught by Ganesh Rám,

Who I'm quite sure would be sorry

If he came to any harm.

Yet this Moonserim<sup>2</sup> is trying

To withhold from us our due ,

See, that field of mine is drying—

He won't let the water through.

What's the reason, sir? God knows it.

See, that channel from the tank—

I could open it or close it,

As the water rose and sank,

Give our village what it needed,

Store the rest , but now they say

Our supply must be impeded

For some land two miles away

What would Mahmood Khan or Lony

Ochter Sahib have said to this ?

Ganesh Rám is widely known, he

Is too straight to work amiss

He forgets, though, that Rasála.

What could such as he is know

Of Mahmood Khan from near Ambála,

Him who made this village grow ?

He is young—young men in work are

Sharp and active I am old

What I say is, let the Sirkar

Now the scales of justice hold



So he spoke, with warmth yet wary,

Weaving in and out his tale

*Lony Ochter—Rasaldári*

As the words of most avail

<sup>1</sup> Persons resident in the East do not require to be told that the common people have a curious way of speaking of Ochterlony as Lony Ochter

<sup>2</sup> Moonserim, a sub overseer in the Revenue Department

## SNAKE-BITE

### AN INCIDENT OF MODERN AJMERE

THE woman Khorī, the wife

Of the herdsman Amar Singh,

Who saw her depart this life,

And witnessed the cobra spring

There wasn't a doubt of the fact

From all that the neighbours said

The snake was killed in the act

And brought to the *thānāh*<sup>1</sup> dead

<sup>1</sup> A Police post, the head of which is called the *thānāddar*

But three weeks after a lad

Looked into a disused well

And one month after a sad,

Sad story there was to tell

The thánadár came and saw,

And (to cut the matter short)

Old Amar Singh and his brother-in-law

Confessed in the Sessions Court

They had put her out of the way

Because of her goings-on

She went to the temple each day,

Tho' they told her not to    Upon

The temple steps she was seen

The night she was last alive

And the priest he was young, with a full-fed spleen,

While Khorí was forty-five

And Rajput honour, you know,  
Recks little of English laws  
In a case like that Not a blow  
Was struck at the priest, because  
All scandal they wished to hide  
It was rather fine—was it not?  
And hard that no family pride  
May now wipe out such a blot,  
' Without being chained like a thief,  
And banished across the seas  
There is the story in brief  
Of a snake-bite—which, if you please,  
Is common enough The tale  
In different forms you may learn  
To read if you take up the trail  
Of many a snake-bite return



# A THAKUR AT HOME

(IN A BRITISH DISTRICT)

## I

HE lives amid a curious pile that towers  
Above the mud-built dwellings of the herd,  
Whose friend he is and chief of earthly powers  
The sorcerer's spell, the Brahman's blighting word  
Maintain their sway beside his easy rule,  
And no one seems to feel the Thakur's thrall,  
For, save one modern thing, the Government School,  
Time-honoured custom is the lord of all.

The sun goes down on droves of goats and kine  
Streaming within the village gates the moon  
Looks on the Thakur boosing o'er his wine  
And lulled by beat of drum in endless tune  
Contentment holds the village and its chief  
The scene is one of dirt, but not of grief

## II

"A stagnant pool," the traveller may say  
"A century breeds no change where grief and mind  
Alike are not none looks beyond to-day,  
Or knows the outer world, their joys are blind  
A man lies down beside the beast he drives,  
And eats his frugal meal without a sigh  
Is that the goal and end of human lives?—  
Content to live—content perhaps to die!"

Ah well ! the outer world is pressing in

And coming nearer to the stagnant pool,

And not to know will soon be held a sin—

But is the Pundit happier than the fool ?

God help the Thakur when he asks that question

It sticks a little in my own digestion

## A THAKUR IN A RAGE

(IN A NATIVE STATE)

FRIEND, do you say it is well for us that the big Sirkar  
Is here to watch over our rights and our children's  
rights in the land?  
It seems to me to be more on the side of a proud Durbar  
Which laughs secure at my wrong because I am tied  
foot and hand



Scribes and judges may reap the rupees I have sown  
broadcast,

But the Durbar will never forget it was weak when our  
house was strong

It seeks to lessen my power , it owes me a grudge for the  
past,

And is always watching and trying to make me out in  
the wrong

What do they want me to do? Go out on the jungle  
side

With all my retainers and earn the name of an outlaw  
bold?

If they force me ever to that, I will humble somebody's  
pride ,

It shall cost them dear, my revenge—I will pay it a  
thousandfold

## MAULED

AT SIWAI MADHOPUR (Jeypore)

*31d January 1893*

ONE of an army of beaters,

Five or six hundred men,

Followed a wounded tigress

Down thro' a jungly glen ,

Saw her lying, and rashly,

Foolishly, threw a stone—

(Says a shikari near him)

We heard a roar and a groan

Then four shots    The shikari  
    (May bounce as shikaris can)  
Says that he dropped the tigress  
    Standing over the man.

Whatever the facts, his shooting  
    Deserves a medal to win,  
For he saved the life of the beater,  
    Tho' he spoilt the tiger's skin

Saved—let's hope    but a broken  
    Arm from a tiger's jaws  
And wounds upon head and body  
    From those terrible fangs and claws  
Must heal ere the reckless Naga  
    Can be saved, poor fellow, outright,  
And show with pride in his village  
    The marks of a tiger's bite



One of an army of beaters,  
Five or six hundred men,  
Tracking a wounded tigress  
Down thro' a jungly glen—  
Why have I told the story?  
Simply because he said,  
“ *Tell the Maharaja* ”

*29th January*

His name was  
Sheoram Dass—and he's dead  
The shikari's name has a Rajput ring,  
Shekhawat of Sikar is brave Oom Singh

## THE PRESENT SIEGE OF BHURTPORE

*The Genus loci protests*

THEY talk of the siege of Bhurtpore,

But never a thought they give,

As their guns they wipe, whether duck and snipe

Would rather die than live

No place like this they declare,

And they call it sport and fun

As the fowl go by like clouds in the sky

To drop them one by one

The white man's heart it is strong,  
We know his courage and pluck ,  
We are not Jain,<sup>1</sup> yet we cannot divine  
Why he shoots such myriads of duck

'Tis good when a tiger dies,  
But we count it strange and harsh,  
The passion some feel for duck and teal  
And snipe in the lonely marsh

<sup>1</sup> The Jains object to the destruction of animal life in any shape, even of a noxious reptile or mad dog

## A SONG OF JODHPORE, 1893

THERE'S a place in Rajputana with a fort of old renown

And a liberal-hearted fine old king,

And the traveller who visits that most hospitable town

Hears a lot about Sir Pratap Singh

He is Minister and Commandant of Cavalry in one,

And his fellows, by Jove, *can* ride ,

You should go there for a "pig-stick" if you want to see

some fun

There are pigs, Sir, on every side

### CHORUS

Hunting the gallant boar,

Englishman and Rahtore,

Brothers in sport, ride o'er

The sandy plain at Jodhpore

They won the Polo Tournament this year, the plucky  
team

Sir Pratap took to Poona t'other day ,  
And the liberal-hearted king, Maharaja Jeswant Singh,  
Says his men can fight as well as play ,  
We shall find them by our side if we ever have to  
ride

On the frontier far away against the foe,  
And we feel the brave Rahtore, like his ancestor of  
yore,  
Is an ally to be trusted, don't you know ?

#### CHORUS

Hunting the gallant boar,  
Englishman and Rahtore,  
Brothers in sport, ride o'er  
The sandy plain at Jodhpore

Do we think too much of sport as good training for our  
youth?

Is the teacher sick or sorry when his art  
Makes his pupil better man than himself, do what he can?

Nay, he feels an honest pride in his heart.  
For a victory o'er foe whose strength was never feared  
Is nothing, and we keep the old rule,  
*Let all rivalry be keen and whoever wins be cheered—*  
That's the lesson we have learnt at school

#### CHORUS

Hunting the gallant boar,  
Englishman and Rahtore,  
Brothers in sport, ride o'er  
The sandy plain at Jodhpore

## FAMINE IN RAJPUTANA

1892

THE goddess of Chitor in olden time

Craved regal victims—superstition tells

But this gaunt spectre ravages and dwells

Among the poor, in poverty and slime,

Tempting despair and maddening to crime

We read in former days how dried-up wells

And barren fields brought death old chronicles

Speak of slain hecatombs but now like chime

Of bells o'er hills the railway's scream is heard

The Iron Horse has saved the land and scared

The spectre Famine, like some carrion bird

Disturbed at its foul feast. Had God but spared

The poor man's cattle, ah, what joy had stirred

The hearts of those for whom in need He cared!



## THE HOUSE UPON THE LAKE

AJMER, 19TH MARCH 1890

IN varying mood four years and more

These eyes have seen the ripples break

And waves arise to wild wind's roar

Beside this house upon the lake

Sunrise and sunset, and the play

Of light and shadow thro' the year—

I know them well, for night and day

The lake made music in mine ear

The green in front, with birds and bloom  
And ferns and trees that shade the sky ,  
These marble walls, each quaint cool room—  
I leave them, not without a sigh,

To dwell upon a distant hill  
Already loved for its own sake  
But ah ! to-day my thoughts are still  
With the old house upon the lake

## THE HOUSE UPON THE HILL

MOUNT ABU, 20TH MARCH 1894

FOUR years again have passed and schooled

Since mine the task with earnest will  
To follow better men who ruled

From this bright house upon the hill

The names of Lawrence, Sutherland,<sup>1</sup>

And others linger round its walls ,  
Its garden fair a gentler hand,  
O ferns and flowers to me recalls

Looking upon the lake below,  
The hills around, beyond, I seem  
To hear the sounds of Long Ago  
As of those days I rhyme and dream

'Tis classic ground, tho' railway near  
May shriek, I wonder, Abuji,  
If ground there be not classic here  
In Rajasthan so kind to me

The Past and Present to compare,  
From each its fragrance to distil,  
Where could be fitter spot, O where,  
Than this bright house upon the hill?

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Colonel J. Sutherland was Agent to the Governor General for Rajputana from 1841 to 1848, and Sir Henry Lawrence from 1853 to 1857



## NOTES TO RHYMES

I VENTURE to preface these Notes with the following extract from the essay on the Rajput States in Sir Alfred Lyall's admirable book, *Asiatic Studies* (pp 182-186) —

“ The region to which we refer is that which is now called, in the administrative nomenclature of the Indian Empire, *Rajputána*, and, by the natives of India, *Rajasthán*, or the country of the chiefs. It is the region within which the pure blooded *Rajpút* clans have maintained their independence under their own chieftains, and have in some instances kept together their primitive societies ever since the dominion of the *Rajpúts* over the great plains of North-Western India was cast down and broken to pieces seven centuries ago by the Musalmán irruptions from Central Asia. The first Musalmán invasions found *Rajpút* dynasties ruling in all the chief cities of the north and over the rich Gangetic plains eastward to the confines of modern Bengal—at Lahore, Delhi, Kanauj, and Ajodhya. Out of these great cities and fertile lands the *Rajpút* chiefs were driven forth southward and westward into the central regions of India, where a more difficult country gave them a second line of defence against the foreigners. And this line they have held not unsuccessfully up to the present day. The boundaries of their actual territory are not easily defined without a map, though no

boundaries of political territory in India have varied so little in historic times. After the earliest Mahomedan conquests the Rājput country seems to have extended (speaking roughly) from the Indus and the Sutlej on the west and north west right across the Indian continent eastward up to the vicinity of the Jumna River at Agra and Delhi, and southward until it touched the Vindhya range of mountains. This great central region had for its natural barriers on the west and north west the desert, on the east the rocky, broken tracts which run along west of the Jumna, and on the south the passes and woodlands of the Vindhya mountains. And though in many parts of this country, to the south and south east especially, the dominion of the Rājputs has been overlaid by Mahomedan or Maratha usurpations, yet everywhere Rājput septs or petty chiefships may still be found existing in various degrees of independence. And there are, of course, Rājput chiefs outside Rājputana altogether, though none of political importance. But Rājputana proper, the country still under the independent rule of the most ancient families of the purest clans, may now be understood generally to mean the great tract that would be crossed by two lines, of which one should be drawn on the map of India from the frontier of Sind eastward to the gates of Agra, and the other from the southern border of the Punjab Government near the Sutlej southward and south eastward until it meets the broad belt of Maratha States under the Guicowar, Holkar, and Sindia, which runs across India from Baroda to Gwalior. This territory is divided into nineteen states, of which sixteen are possessed by Rājput clans, and the chief of the clan or sept is the state's ruler. To the Sesodia clan, the oldest and purest blood in India, belong the States of Oodipoor, Banswarra, Perlabhgarh, and Shahpura, to the Rathore clan, the States of Jodhpoor and Bikanir, Jeypoor and Ulwar to the Kuchwaha, and so on.

“Of these states the highest in rank and the most important politically are the States of Oodipoor, Jodhipoor, and Jeypoor. The ancestors of the family which now rules in Oodipoor were hereditary leaders of the clan which has held from time immemorial, from a date before the earliest Mahomedan invasion, the country which now forms the territory of their chief, the chiefs of Jodhipoor and Jeypoor are the descendants of families who gave princes to the tribes that were dominant in Upper India before the Musalmáns came. In fact, all these states have very much the same territorial origin, they are the lands which a clan, or a sept, or a family, has seized and settled upon and have managed to hold fast through centuries of warfare. And what we know of the manner in which these states were founded gives a very fair sample of the movements and changes of the primitive world. When the dominant Rajpút families lost their dominion in the rich Gangetic plains, one part of their clan seems to have remained in the conquered country, having submitted to the foreigner, cultivating in strong communities of villages and federations of villages, and paying such land-tax as the ruler could extract. These communities still exist and flourish in British India, where there are very many more Rajpúts than in Rajputana. Another part of the clan, probably the near kinsmen of the defeated chief, followed his family into exile, and helped him to carve out another, but a much poorer, dominion. They discovered a tract just productive enough to yield them food, and wild enough to shelter them from the great armies of the foreigner. Here the chief built himself a fort upon a hill; his clansmen slew or subdued the tribes they found in possession of the soil, and the lands were all parcelled off among the chief's kinsfolk, the indigenous proprietors being subjected to payment of a land tax, but not otherwise degraded. Having thus made a settlement and a city of refuge, the chief and his Rajpúts started upon an



interminable career of feuds and forays, striving eternally to enlarge their borders at the cost of their neighbours. When the land grew too strait for the support of the chief's family or of the sept—that is, when there were no vacant allotments—a landless son of the chief would assemble a band and set forth to make room for himself elsewhere. If he was lucky, he found his room, if not, the family was rid of his company. In either event he was provided for. In this way the whole country of Rajputāna was occupied by the clans and septs which we now find there, and their territories are now called by us states, but these states are constitutionally quite unlike any others in India. For, while everything else in the political order of India has changed, the Rajput States have managed to preserve unaltered much of their original structure, built up out of the needs and circumstances of primitive life. The strain of incessant warfare, in which these tribal sovereignties were engaged from their foundation centuries ago until the English peace of 1818, has served to keep tight the bonds which held them together, without being violent enough to break them asunder. Of course the original type has undergone some modifications, towns have grown up round the ancient forts, the lands of each sept have gradually, and by constant friction, rounded themselves off into distinct territories, and the chiefs have in some instances succeeded in modernising their status toward the likeness of territorial sovereignty. But on the whole there are probably few or no political fabrics having any pretence to be called states, in any part of historic Asia, which have suffered so little essential change between the eleventh and nineteenth centuries—a period which for Rajputāna was one long war time, from the first inroads of the Ghaznevī Kings to the final pacification of Central India by the military and political measures of the English Governor-General, Lord Hastings.

“During these seven centuries or so the Rajpút clans had various fortunes. The kings of the early Musalman dynasties in Northern India pierced their country from end to end by rapid rushing invasions, plundering and ravishing, breaking the idols, and razing the beautifully sculptured temples, Buddhist and Brahmanic. But so long as the object of these incursions was mere booty or fanatical slaughter, there was not much to be got out of the interior of Rajputána. The chiefs retired to their fortresses, great circumvallations of the broad tops of scarped hills, with three or four lines of defence, strong holds which cost the enemy a siege of some twelve or eighteen months, with the grand finale of a desperate sally *en masse* upon your lines by the garrison without hope or fear, dressed in saffron garments, drunk with opium and with the blood of their own womankind. The victor in obstinate and dangerous conflicts of this kind found himself paying rather dear for a warlike triumph, and as for conquest in the sense of establishing permanent dominion, the country was not worth the trouble of holding it against the clans and their faithful allies, the aboriginal non Aryan tribes of the jungle. So early as the end of the twelfth century, nevertheless, the Mahomedans had discovered the great importance, as a *point d'appui* in the middle of the Rajpút country, of Ajmere, a city lying at the foot of an almost impregnable hill fort, well watered for these arid tracts, in a situation at once strong, central, and most picturesque. The fort was taken by the Afghan King Shaháb ud din at the end of the twelfth century, and on the crest of the hill the traveller is still shown a grave yard thick with mounds, where are said to lie the bones of the faithful Islamites who fell in the storm, or in the massacre by which the Rajpúts celebrated the fort's recapture a few years later. Since then Ajmere has been lost and won several times, its possession being the symbol of political predominance in Rajputána for it is a Castle Dangerous which no

government could hold in the midst of the clans without powerful supports and the prestige of military superiority. The Moghal Emperors made it an imperial residence in the seventeenth century, in the confusion of the eighteenth century the Rajputs got it again for a while, but soon had to yield it to the Maratha chief Sindia, then at the height of his fortunes. By him it was ceded, with the lands adjoining, to the British in 1818, and thus for six centuries or more, with a few intervals, Ajmere has contained the garrison by which the masters of India have enforced their paramount jurisdiction over the unruly clans of Rajputana."

#### THE MEWAR FAMILY P 25

The following extract from a sketch of Chitor compiled from Tod and other authorities by Dr Stratton, resident at Oodeypore a few years ago, relates to the Mewar family —

"In the beginning of the eighth century Chitor was the seat of the Mori division of the Pramars or Puar Rajputs then ruling in Mewar and Malwa, but it was taken about A.D. 728 by Bashpa, usually called Bappa, the ancestor of the present Maharana, since which time it has, with brief interruption arising from the fortunes of war, continued with the present house. But Chitor and the rich plains of Mewar were not the first possessions of this dynasty on the central plateau of India. For nearly two centuries previously it had ruled in Bhilwar, the wild hill country of the Bhils, which buttresses that plateau on the west, between Idar on the south and modern Udaipur on the north. Prior to that again it had for nearly four centuries held sway in the western peninsula of Saurashtra, now called Kathiawar. The vicissitudes of the family already alluded to were illustrated alike in its

coming to the Bhil highlands and the Mewar plains, if not also in its earlier migration to the sea coast province on the west. These stages and their epochs in the course of the Suryabans Rajputs, successively settling in Saurashtra, Bhilwar, and finally in Mewar, are historical, though the details of such remote periods are legendary."

## TRANSLATION OF A GRANT OF LAND HELD BY A

BRAHMAN P 26

## "GRANT HELD BY A BRAHMIN OF BIRKHAIRAH

"A Brahmin's orphan was compelled by hunger to seek sustenance in driving an oil-mill, instead of oil the receptacle was filled with blood. The frightened oilman demanded of the child who he was, 'A Brahmin's orphan,' was the reply. Alarmed at the enormity of his guilt in thus employing the son of a priest, *he covered the palm of his hand with earth, in which he sowed the tilsat seed*, and went on a pilgrimage to Dwarica. He demanded the presence (*darsana*) of the god, the priests pointed to the ocean, when he plunged in and had an interview with Dwarica Nath, who presented him with a written order on the Rana for forty five *bigahs* of land. He returned and threw the writing before the Rana, on the steps of the temple of Juggernath. The Rana read the writing of the god, placed it on his head, and immediately made out the grant. This is three hundred and fifty years ago, as recorded by an inscription on stone, and his descendant Koshala yet enjoys it"—(A true translation —J TOD) Tod, vol 1 p 552

## THE JOHUR. P 35

In his *Annals of Mewar* Tod refers to several instances when a whole tribe has been extinguished by this awful rite, and observes as follows —

“To the fair of other lands the fate of the Rajpootni must appear one of appalling hardship. In each stage of life death is ready to claim her by the poppy at its dawn, by the flames in riper years, while the safety of the interval depending on the uncertainty of war, at no period is her existence worth a twelvemonth's purchase. The loss of a battle, or the capture of a city, is a signal to avoid captivity and its horrors, which to the Rajpootni are worse than death. To the doctrines of Christianity Europe owes the boon of protection to the helpless and the fair, who are comparatively safe amidst the vicissitudes of war, to which security the chivalry of the Middle Ages doubtless contributed. But it is singular that a nation so refined, so scrupulous in its ideas with regard to females, as the Rajpoot, should not have entered into some national compact to abandon such proof of success as the bondage<sup>1</sup> of the sex. We can enter into the feeling and applaud the deed which ensured the preservation of their honour by the fatal *Johur* when the foe was the brutalised Tatar. But the practice was common in the international wars of the Rajpoots, and I possess numerous inscriptions (on stone and on brass) which record as the first token of victory the captive wives of the foeman. When ‘the mother of Sisera looked out of the window, and cried *through the lattice*, Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?—have they not sped? have they not divided the prey, to every man a damsel or two?’ we have a perfect picture of the Rajpoot mother expecting her son from the foray

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<sup>1</sup> *Bunda* is “a bondsman” in Persia, *bandi*, “a female slave” in Hindi

"The Jewish law with regard to female captives was perfectly analogous to that of Menu; both declare them 'lawful prize,' and both Moses and Menu establish rules sanctioning the marriage of such captives with the captors. 'When a girl is made captive by her lover, after a victory over her kinsman,' marriage 'is permissible by law.'<sup>1</sup> That forcible marriage, in the Hindu law termed *sachasa*, viz. 'the seizure of a maiden by force from her house while she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsman and friends have been slain in battle,'<sup>2</sup> is the counterpart of the ordinance regarding the usage of a captive in the Pentateuch,<sup>3</sup> excepting the '*shaving of the head*,' which is the sign of complete slavery with the Hindu. When Hector, anticipating his fall, predicts the fate which awaits Andromache, he draws a forcible picture of the misery of the Rajpoot, but the latter, instead of a lachrymose and enervating harangue as he prepared for the battle with the same chance of defeat, would have spared her the pain of plying the 'Argive loom' by her death. To prevent such degradation, the brave Rajpoot has recourse to the *Johur*, or immolation of every female of the family. nor can we doubt that, educated as are the females of that country, they gladly embrace such a refuge from pollution. Who would not be a Rajpoot in such

<sup>1</sup> Menu, *On Marriage*, art. 26

<sup>2</sup> Menu, *On Marriage*, art. 33

<sup>3</sup> "When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife, then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails, and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife."—Deut. chap. xxi vv. 10-13

1 case? The very term widow (*rand*) is used in common parlance as one of reproach

“Menu commands that whoever accosts 1 woman shall do so by the title of ‘sister,’<sup>1</sup> and that ‘way must be made for her, even as for the aged, for a priest, a prince, or a bridegroom’, and in the admirable text on the laws of hospitality he ordains that ‘pregnant women, brides, and damsels shall have food<sup>2</sup> before all the other guests’, which, with various other texts, appears to indicate a time when women were less than now objects of restraint—a custom attributable to the paramount dominion of the Mohamedans, from whose rigid system the Hindus have borrowed. But so many conflicting texts are to be found in the pages of Menu, that we may pronounce the compilation never to have been the work of the same legislator from whose dicta we may select with equal facility texts tending to degrade as to exalt the sex. For the following he would meet with many plaudits ‘Let women be constantly supplied with ornaments at festivals and jubilees, for if the wife be not elegantly attired, she will not exhilarate her husband’ A wife gaily adorned, ‘the whole house is embellished’<sup>3</sup> In the following text he pays an unequivocal compliment to her power ‘A female is able to draw from the right path in this life, not a fool only, but even a sage, and can lead him in subjection to desire or to wrath’ With this acknowledgment from the very fountain of authority, we have some ground for asserting that ‘les femmes font les mœurs,’ even in Rajpootana, and that though immured and invisible, their influence on society is not less certain than if they moved in the glare of open day

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<sup>1</sup> *On Education*, art. 129

<sup>2</sup> *On Marriage*, art. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *On Marriage*, arts 57, 60-63

"Most erroneous ideas have been formed of the Hindu female from the pictures drawn by those who never left the banks of the Ganges. They are represented as degraded beings, and that not one in many thousands can even read. I would ask such travellers whether they know the name of Rajpoot, for there are few of the lowest chieftains whose daughters are not instructed both to read and write, though, the customs of the country requiring much form in epistolary writing, only the signature is made to letters. But of their intellect, and knowledge of mankind, whoever has had to converse with a Rajpootni guardian of her son's rights must draw a very different conclusion. Though excluded by the Salic Law of India from governing, they are declared to be fit regents during minority, and the history of India is filled with anecdotes of able and valiant females in this capacity."

### RAKHI BHAI. P 40

In his *Annals of Mewar* Tod writes —

"Buhadoor had remained but a fortnight, when the tardy advance of Hemayoon with his succours warned him to retire. According to the annals, he left Bengal at the solicitation of the queen Kurnavati, but instead of following up the spoil-encumbered foe, he commenced a pedantic war of words with Buhadoor, punning on the word 'Cheetore'. Had Hemayoon not been so distant, this catastrophe would have been averted, for he was bound by the laws of chivalry, the claims of which he had acknowledged, to defend the queen's cause, whose knight he had become. The relation of the peculiarity of a custom analogous to the taste of the chivalrous age of Europe may amuse. When her Amazonian sister the Rahtore queen was slain, the mother of the infant prince took a surer method to shield him in demanding



the fulfilment of the pledge given by Hemayoon when she sent the *Rákhi* to that monarch

“ ‘The festival of the bracelet’ (*Rákhi*) is in spring, and whatever its origin, it is one of the few when an intercourse of gallantry of the most delicate nature is established between the fair sex and the cavaliers of Rajast’han. Though the bracelet may be sent by maidens, it is only on occasions of urgent necessity or danger. The Rajpoot dame bestows with the *Rákhi* the title of adopted brother, and while its acceptance secures to her all the protection of a ‘*cavalier serviente*,’ scandal itself never suggests any other tie to his devotion. He may hazard his life in her cause, and yet never receive a smile in reward, for he cannot even see the fair object who, as brother of her adoption, has constituted him her defender. But there is a charm in the mystery of such connexion, never endangered by close observation, and the loyal to the fair may well attach a value to the public recognition of being the *Rákhi bund Bhác*, the ‘bracelet-bound brother’ of a princess. The intrinsic value of such pledge is never looked to, nor is it requisite it should be costly, though it varies with the means and rank of the donor, and may be of flock silk and spangles, or gold chains and gems. The acceptance of the pledge and its return is by the *latchhi*, or corset, of simple silk or satin, or gold brocade and pearls. In shape or application there is nothing similar in Europe, and as defending the most delicate part of the structure of the fair, it is peculiarly appropriate as an emblem of devotion. A whole province has often accompanied the *latchhi*, and the monarch of India was so pleased with this courteous delicacy in the customs of Rajast’han, on receiving the bracelet of the princess Kurnavati, which invested him with the title of her brother, and uncle and protector to her infant Oody Sing, that he pledged himself to her service, ‘even if the

demand were the castle of Rinthumbor ' Hemayoon proved himself a true knight, and even abandoned his conquests in Bengal when called on to redeem his pledge, and succour Cheetore, and the widows and minor sons of Sanga Rana <sup>1</sup> Hemayoon had the highest proofs of the worth of those courting his protection, he was with his father Baber in all his wars in India, and at the battle of Biana his prowess was conspicuous, and is recorded by Baber's own pen He amply fulfilled his pledge, expelled the foe from Cheetore, took Mandoo by assault, and, as some revenge for her king's aiding the king of Guzzernat, he sent for the Rana Bikramajeet, whom, following their own notions of investiture, he girt with a sword in the captured citadel of his foe "

*" THE WRATH OF THAT DREAD GODDESS WHO AYE  
CRAVED PRINCES FOR VICTIMS " P 44*

The following is taken from Stratton's sketch of Chitor, referred to in a previous note —

" Superstition had it that when the fortress was in danger the goddess

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<sup>1</sup> " Many romantic tales are founded on 'the gift of the Rakhi.' The author, who was placed in the enviable situation of being able to do good, and on the most extensive scale, was the means of restoring many of these ancient families from degradation to affluence. The greatest reward he could, and the only one he would, receive, was the courteous civility displayed in many of these interesting customs He was the '*Rakhi-bund Bhac*' of, and received 'the bracelet' from, three queens of Oodipoor, Boondi, and Kotah, besides Chund-Bae the maiden sister of the Rana, as well as many ladies of the chieftains of rank, with whom he interchanged letters The sole articles of 'barbaric pearl and gold' which he conveyed from a country where he was six years supreme are these testimonies of friendly regard Intrinsically of no great value, they were presented and accepted in the ancient spirit, and he retains them with a sentiment the more powerful because he can no longer render them any service."—Tod, vol 1 p 313

of Chitor always required the sacrifice of a crowned head in its defence. Twelve had perished on the first occasion, and on the second, though the Rana himself had not, the Prince of Deolia (Pertabgarh), a branch of the Chitor house, was killed with the ensign of Mewar waving over him. It was an evil omen, therefore, when, during this third siege, Uday Sing departed from Chitor, though there was no lack of chieftains of Mewar and allies from elsewhere, including the Tuar Prince of Gwalior, who failed not in its defence, as with the Sisodias and many of the related tribes of Rajputs, Chitor was considered as much a sanctuary of the Hindu religion as a fortress of Hindu power.

"The Rao of Salumbar was killed at the Surajpol, i.e. the Gate of the Sun, on the eastern brow. Indeed, the list of chiefs who fought and fell would be one of all the highest nobles of Mewar, and of many from neighbouring territories. But the two whose names have been remembered most, and were singularly immortalised by Akbar himself, were Patta Sing of Kailwa, a Sisodia of the Salumbar branch, and Jai Mal Rahtor of Bednor. When the Rao of Salumbar fell and the father of Patta Sing was also slain, important command devolved on the latter, then merely a lad of sixteen and lately married. His widowed mother thought she could do her country better service by dying in fight than resigning herself in *sati*. So making Patta put on clothes of saffron colour to mark his resolve, she armed herself, and in order that there might be no looking back on the part of her son for his young bride left behind, she armed her too with a lance, and the three—Patta Sing, his mother, and his girl wife—descended the hill, and all fell fighting at its foot.

"With such example before them, the garrison had no thought of surrender, but when, after a lengthened siege, the northern defences had been destroyed,

the garrison weakened by famine, and Jai Mal of Bednor, the commander, had been wounded, no means remained of longer resistance. The wounding of Jai Mal is thus described. He was on the battlements at night directing repairs, when Akbar, said to have been accompanied by the Jaipur chief, was moving through the advanced lines of his camp. Seeing a light on the fort wall he fired his favourite matchlock. Next day it was known the ball, "shot at a venture" in the night, had wounded Jai Mal, and Mussulman records state that Akbar, who previously called his matchlock 'durust andaz,' or the straight thrower, thereon dubbed it 'Singram,' as meriting now the name of a hero. Jai Mal, scorning to die by a distant shot, was, in the next attempt of the garrison to drive back the enemy, carried out on the shoulders of a stalwart clansman, and so was killed fighting as he wished. All, however, was of no avail, and again the fearful closing scenes of the two earlier sieges were repeated, the ladies and women in thousands being sacrificed, the men then going out to their last fight, and the conqueror coming in. Whether Akbar was irritated at the prolonged defence or his troops were out of hand, it is said that the work of subsequent slaughter and demolition was even greater and more deliberate on this than on the two former occasions. Yet he marked his appreciation of the valour of Jai Mal and Patta in a singular way—by having effigies of them carved in stone, which he placed on stone elephants at the gateway of his palace at Delhi. There they were seen and described a century later by the traveller Bernier in A.D. 1563, but subsequently they were removed by Aurangzeb as savouring of image-making. Some time ago they were discovered, and are now to be seen at Delhi, not the least interesting of the archæological remains there, though whether they were meant by Akbar in honour of his Rajput opponents, or of himself as the conqueror of such men, is a doubtful point.

"With this, the last of the three great sacs by the Mussulmans, the stirring story of old Chitor may be said to close. Though recovered in Jahangir's time by Rana Amra Sing, grandson of Udaï Sing, from an uncle of the latter, in whose hands the Emperor had found it politic to place it, and though always held the chief fortress of Mewar, it was not thereafter maintained by the Ranas as their capital of residence, its buildings were left unrepaired, and its subsequent history, which has been comparatively uneventful, may be summed up in the word—decay—as can be read also in its crumbling ruins."

The condition of Chitor in the time of Akbar's successor was thus noticed by the ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, who passed it on his way up country in 1615 —

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"Cytor, an ancient citie ruined on a hill, but so that it appears a tomb of wonderful magnificence. There stands upon above one hundred churches, all of carved stone, many fure towers and landthornes cut throw many pillars, and innumerable houses, but no one inhabitant. There is but one ascent to the hill, it being precipitous, sloping up, cut out of the rock, having four gates in the ascent before one arrive at the citie gate, which is magnificent. The citie is incomprassed at the top about eight course, and at the south west end a goodly old castle. I lodged by a poor village at the foot of the hill. This citie stands in the country of one Ranna, a Prince newly subdued by this King, or rather brought to confesse tribute. This citie was wonne by Ecbarsha, father to this Mogoll."

The ambassador's chaplain, the Rev. Edward Terry, similarly described it —

"Chitor, an antient great kingdome, the chief citie so called, which standeth on a mighty high hill flat on the top, walled about at the least ten

English miles There appear to this day above an hundred ruin'd churches  
and divers fur palaces, which are lodged in like manner among their ruins,  
besides many exquisite pillars of carved stone, and the ruins likewise of an  
hundred thousand stone houses It was won from Ranis, an antient  
Indian Prince, who was forced to live himself ever after in high mountainous  
places adjoining to that province, and his posterity to live there ever since  
Taken from him it was by Achabar Padshah (the father of that King who  
lived and reigned when I was in those parts) after a very long siege which  
furnished the besieged, without which it could never have been gotten "

It may be noted that Jai Mal's descendants are still strong at Bednor, and  
those of Patta Sing at Amet

"DOOMED HER OWN CHILD" P 44

"Oody Sing was about six years of age He had gone to sleep after his  
rice and milk, when his nurse was alarmed by screams from the *rawula*,<sup>1</sup> and  
the Bari,<sup>2</sup> coming in to take away the remains of the dinner, informed her of  
the cause, the assassination of the Rani Aware that one murder was the  
precursor of another, the faithful nurse put her charge into a fruit basket, and  
covering it with leaves she delivered it to the Bari, enjoining him to escape  
with it from the fort Scarcely had she time to substitute her own infant in  
the room of the prince, when Bunbeer, entering, inquired for him Her lips  
refused their office, she pointed to the cradle, and beheld the murderous  
steel buried in the heart of her babe The little victim to fidelity was burnt  
amidst the tears of the *rawula*, the inconsolable household of their late

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<sup>1</sup> The seraglio, or female palace

<sup>2</sup> Bari, Naé, are names for the barbers, who are the *cuisiniers* of the Rajpoots

sovereign, who supposed that their grief was given to the last pledge of the illustrious Sanga. The nurse (Dhaḷ) was a Rajpootnee of the Khreechee tribe, her name Punna, or 'the Diamond'. Having consecrated with her tears the ashes of her child, she hastened after that she had preserved. But well had it been for Mewar had the promise fulfilled its intention, and had the annals never recorded the name of Oody Sing in the catalogue of her princes."—*Tod's Annals of Mewar*

### THE RANA KARAN P 47

Rana Karan, A.D. 1621, was the first chief who waited on the Emperor (Jahangir), the independence of Mewar having departed with his father Amra. Jagat Singh succeeded A.D. 1628

### "AMBER AND MARWAR ONCE MORE AT OUR SIDE" P 48

"The princes of Amber and Marwar repaired to Rana Umra at Oodipoor, where a triple league was formed, which once more united them to the head of their nation. This treaty of unity of interests against the common foe was solemnised by nuptial engagements, from which those princes had been excluded since the reigns of Akber and Pertap. To be readmitted to this honour was the basis of this triple alliance, in which they ratified on oath the renunciation of all connexion, domestic or political, with the empire. It was moreover stipulated that the sons of such marriage should be heirs, or if the issue were females, that they should never be dishonoured by being married to a Mogul.

"But this remedy, as will be seen, originated a worse disease, it was a sacrifice of the rights of primogeniture (clung to by the Rajpoots with extreme

pertinacity), productive of the most injurious effects, which introduced domestic strife, and called upon the stage an umpire not less baneful than the power from whose iron grasp they were on the point of freeing themselves for although this treaty laid prostrate the throne of Baber, it ultimately introduced the Mahrattas as partisans in their family disputes, who made the bone of contention their own"—Tod, vol 1 p 399

# TRANSLATION OF THE GRANT FOR NATHDWARA. P 58

"Sri Mahrana Bhima Sing-ji, commanding

"To the towns of Sri ji, or to the (personal) lands of the *Gosaén-ji*,<sup>1</sup> no molestation shall be offered No warrants or exactions shall be issued or levied upon them All complaints, suits, or matters, in which justice is required, originating in Nat'hdwara, shall be settled there, none shall interfere therein, and the decisions of the Gosaén-ji I shall invariably confirm The town and transit duties<sup>2</sup> (of Nat'hdwara and villages pertaining thereto), the assay (*purkhaye*)<sup>2</sup> fees from the public markets, duties on precious metals (*kasoti*),<sup>2</sup> all brokerage (*dulali*), and dues collected at the four gates, all contributions and taxes of whatever kind, are presented as an offering to Sri-ji, let the income thereof be placed in Sri-ji's coffers

"All the products of foreign countries imported by the Vishnuvas,<sup>3</sup> whether domestic or foreign, and intended for consumption at Nat'hdwara,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The high-priest.

<sup>2</sup> All these are royalties, and the Rana was much blamed, even by his Vishnuva ministers, for sacrificing them even to Kaniya.

<sup>3</sup> Followers of Vishnu, Crishna, or Kaniya, chiefly mercantile

<sup>4</sup> Many merchants, by the connivance of the conductors of the caravans of Nat h-ji's goods, contrived to smuggle their goods to Nat hdwara, and, to the



shall be exempt from duties The right of sanctuary (*sirna*) of Sri ji, both in the town and in all his other villages,<sup>1</sup> will be maintained the Almighty will take cognisance of any innovation Wherefore, let all chiefs, farmers of duties, beware of molesting the goods of Nat'hji (the god), and wherever such may halt, let guards be provided for their security, and let each chief convey them through his bounds in safety If of my blood, or if my servants, this warrant will be obeyed for ever and for ever Whoever resumes this grant will be a caterpillar in hell during 60,000 years.

"By command—through the chief butler (*farari*) Eklindas written by Surut Sing, son of Nat'hji Pancholi, Mah sud 1st, Samvat 1865, A D 1809"  
—From Tod's *Annals of Mewar*

## THE RAHTORES P 59

Seoji, 1212 A D Jodha founded Jodhpur 1489 A.D Bika, sixth son of Jodha, founded Bikanir after Jodha Ganga A.D 1516

In his time Marwar united with Mewar to oppose Moghal invasion under Baber, but were defeated in the fatal field of Birna by treachery

Maldeo succeeded Ganga A D 1532, and so employed his power against friend and foe that he became the first prince in Rajwara, or, in the words of Fenshta, "the most potent prince in Hindustan" He redeemed the two most

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disgrace of the high-priest or his underlings, this traffic was sold for their personal advantage. It was a delicate thing to search these caravans, or to prevent the loss to the state from the evasion of the duties The Rana durst not interfere lest he might incur the penalty of his own anathemas The author's influence with the high-priest put a stop to this

<sup>1</sup> This extent of sanctuary is an innovation of the present Rana's, with many others equally unwise.

important possessions of his house, Nagore and Ajmere, and among other conquests dispossessed the sons of Bika of supreme power in Bikanir, captured and restored Serohi from the Deoras, from which house was his mother Akbar, born at Umerkote during the flight of Humayoon, invaded Marwar A D 1561, and established Bikanir in independence of the parent state Jodhpur Maldeo died A.D. 1569, and at his death "the banner of the empire floated pre-eminent over the *panch ranga*, the five coloured flag which had led the Rahtores from victory to victory and waved from the sandhills of Umerkote to the salt lake of Sambhur" Oodey Singh, his son, gave a daughter in marriage to Akbar, who conferred on him the title of Raja and used to call him the "King of the Desert" and "Oodey the Fat" He restored to Oodey Singh all the possessions he had wrested from Marwar except Ajmere

Soor Singh succeeded his father Oodey Singh A D 1595, and died in the Deccan A D 1620 He was succeeded by Guj Singh, who died A D 1638 Then came Jeswant Singh, who ruled forty-two years, dying at Kabul A D 1681 In the struggle for empire among the sons of Shah Jahan he fought for Prince Dara, who nominated him Viceroy of Malwa Kishen, ninth son of Oodey Singh, founded Kishengurh A D 1613, and was made an independent Raja for assassinating, by order of Prince Khoorm, son of Jahangir by a princess of Amber, Govind Das, a faithful Rajput This was done to disgust the Rahtores, and it drove Raja Guj Singh away from the court at Delhi Prince Khoorm next had his elder brother Parváz assassinated, and proceeded to the deposition of his father, who rallied the Rajput princes to his aid

## AMRA SINGH. P 63

"In the month of Bysak, s 1690 (A D 1634), five years before the death of Raja Guj, in a convocation of all the feudality of Maroo, sentence of exclusion from the succession was pronounced upon Umra, accompanied by the solemn and seldom-practised rite of *Dés vatoh* or exile. This ceremony, which is marked as a day of mourning in the calendar, was attended with all the circumstances of funeral pomp. As soon as the sentence was pronounced, that his birthright was forfeited and assigned to his junior brother, and that he ceased to be a subject of Maroo, the *khat* of banishment was brought forth, consisting of sable vestments, in which he was clad, a sable shield was hung upon his back, and a sword of the same hue girded round him, a black horse was then led out, being mounted on which, he was commanded, though not in anger, to depart whither he listed beyond the limits of Maroo"—Tod's *Annals of Marwar*

## "BUT ARUNG THRUST HIS ISLAM DOWN OUR THROATS"

## P 71

"In such detestation did the Hindus hold this intolerant king, that in like manner as they supposed the beneficent Akber to be the devout Mokund in a former birth, so they make the tyrant's body enclose the soul of Kal-Yamun, the foe of Crishna, ere his apotheosis, from whom he fled to Dwarica, and thence acquired the name of Rinchor

"Rin, the 'field of battle'—chor, from chorna, 'to abandon.'"—Tod, vol 1 p 523

In his poem of *Akbar's Dream* Tennyson represents the liberality of Akbar's creed and the intolerance of Aurangzeb's

" I hate the rancour of their castes and creeds,  
 I let men worship as they will, I reap  
 No revenue from the field of unbelief  
 I cull from every faith and race the best  
 And bravest soul for counsellor and friend  
 I loathe the very name of infidel  
 I stagger at the Koran and the sword  
 I shudder at the Christian and the stake "

In his vision after death Akbar says—

" I watched my son,  
 And those that followed, loosen, stone from stone,  
 All my fair work , and from the ruin arose  
 The shriek and curse of trampled millions, even  
 As in the time before , but while I groaned,  
 From out the sunset poured an alien race,  
 Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,  
 Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt therein ,  
 Nor in the field without were seen or heard  
 Fires of suttee, nor wail of baby-wife,  
 Or Indian widow , and in sleep I said,  
 ' All praise to Alla by whatever hands  
 My mission be accomplished ! ' "

#### FOUNDING OF BIKANIR P 75

" It is seldom that so incontestable a title to supremacy can be asserted as that which the weakness and jealousies of the Godarras conferred upon Beeka , and it is a pleasing incident to find almost throughout India, in the observance of certain rites, the remembrance of the original compact which transferred the sovereign power from the lords of the soil to their Rajpoot

conquerors Thus in Mewar the fact of the power conferred upon the Ghelote founder by the Bhil aborigines is commemorated by a custom brought down to the present times At Amber the same is recorded in the important offices retained by the Meenas, the primitive inhabitants of that land Both Kotah and Boondi retain in their names the remembrance of the ancient lords of Harouti, and Beeka's descendants preserve, in a twofold manner, the recollection of their bloodless conquest of the Jits To this day the descendant of Pandú applies the unguent of royalty to the forehead of the successors of Beeka, on which occasion the prince places, 'the sine of relief,' consisting of twenty five pieces of gold, in the hand of the Jit. Moreover, the spot which he selected for his capital was the birthright of a Jit, who would only concede it for this purpose on the condition that his name should be linked in perpetuity with its surrender Naira, or N'ra, was the name of the proprietor, which Beeka added to his own, thus composing that of the future capital, Bikaner"—*Tod's Annals of Bikaner*

#### ANECDOTE OF PUNCTILIO RELATED IN POWLETT'S "GAZETTEER OF BIKANIR" P 83

"In Sambat 1870 (A.D 1813) the two chiefs of Bikanir and Jodhpur became friends, a Guru, Aishji by name, having acted as peacemaker between them. Surat Singh agreed to meet Man Singh at Nagor, and on his way visited Karni's temple, walking on foot through the surrounding wood At Nagore a difficulty occurred, owing to Man Singh's objecting to meet Surat Singh on terms of perfect equality At length Aishji overcame the difficulty by arranging that the Maharajas should neither of them sit on a cushion, which was to be occupied by the Guru alone, while the chiefs sat on

a carpet. Another sacred character having to occupy a seat lower than the Maharaja vindicated his dignity by tying up his head during the durbar. The Guru exhorted the chiefs to brotherly kindness and caused them to eat together.

### RAJA GAJ SINGH OF BIKANIR AND RAJA BIJEY SINGH OF JODHPUR P 91

Gaj Singh was Raja of Bikanir from 1745 A D to 1788 A D. He successfully resisted an invasion upon Bikanir territory from Jodhpur under Raja Abhai Singh, and helped Bakht Singh to defeat his brother Abhai Singh and oust him from the Gadi (A D 1751). On the death of Bakht Singh his son Bijai Singh received great assistance from Gaj Singh in various fights besides the incident referred to in the Rhyme<sup>1</sup>. Allied by marriage with Jesalmere and on friendly terms with Jeypore, Jodhpore, and Mewar, Gaj Singh exalted the Bikanir raj considerably. Once after consulting Karniji, a Charan woman worshipped as an incarnation of Devi, and the patron saint of Bikanir, he accompanied Bijai Singh of Jodhpur to Nathdwara, the famous temple of Sri Krishn, and is said to have astonished even the Gosain there by his learning. The Maharaja of Mewar begged him to mediate between him and Jodhpur for the restoration of Godwar which had been entrusted to the latter by Mewar for merely temporary custody, but in this he was unsuccessful.

Powlett in his *Gazettes for Bikanir* writes as follows on this point (p 62) —

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<sup>1</sup> Tod gives quite a different version of this story. He attributes the saving of the Raja to one of the Jeypore nobles who sat on the skirt of the Maharaja's robe and prevented his rising, and he does not mention the Raja of Bikanir or his two Thakurs.

“The Rana begged Gaj Singh to help him to arrange his difficulties with his nobles and Bijai Singh. Gaj Singh did his best to get Bijai to act in concert with him, but Bijai did not wish the anarchy which then prevailed in Mewar to cease, as it strengthened his hold on Godwar, and both the Rana and the Kishengurh chief told Gaj Singh that it was useless his incurring further trouble and expense by remaining at Nathdwar in hopes of prevailing with the Jodhpur chief. Gaj Singh was convinced of the truth of this, but he resolved on a last effort to induce Bijai Singh to give up Godwar, and with that object he arranged to visit the temple with him, where the Rana by previous agreement also came. Gaj Singh on meeting Bijai in the presence of the Rana again urged him to restore Godwar, and when he failed the Gosain of the temple told Bijai that it was the command of the deity that he should comply. The Jodhpur chief thus pressed turned to his followers and said, ‘Well, the Rana must have your pergunna,’ whereupon Zorawur Singh of Kūsar, always forward, and perhaps perceiving that his master wanted support, exclaimed ‘Hear, ye nobles of Marwar, Godwar is not Bijai Singh’s to give he is indeed lord of the Rahtors but not of the land that you must get from us, and we will die before we part with it, and you will die before you get it.’ This speech settled the matter and the chiefs parted.”

#### BIJEY SINGH ON HIS DEATH-BED P 101

Bijey Singh’s ill luck was proverbial, though his personal gallantry was never doubted. Tod quotes a native bard as saying—“Fortune never attended the stirrup of Bijey Singh, who never gained a battle though at the head of a hundred thousand men, but Ram Singh (his cousin and rival) by his valour and conduct gained victories by the handful.”

The following extract from a subsequent page of the same historian shows that Bijey Singh's misfortunes in the field were not due to him personally, though at the end of his reign, which lasted thirty-one years, the license of his morals even in that loose age and an imbecile attachment to a woman helped to estrange his nobles and complete the anarchy of the country

“Marwar had enjoyed several years of peace, when the rapid strides made by the Mahrattas towards universal rapine, if not conquest, compelled the Rajpoots once more to form an union for the defence of their political existence. Pertáp Sing, a prince of energy and enterprise, was now on the gadi of Ambér. In S 1843 (A D 1787) he sent an ambassador to Beejy Sing, proposing a league against the common foe, and volunteering to lead in person their conjoined forces against them. The battle of Tonga ensued, in which Rahtore valour shone forth in all its glory. Despising discipline, they charged through the dense battalions of De Boigne, sabring his artillery-men at their guns, and compelling Sindia to abandon not only the field, but all his conquests for a time. Beejy Sing, by this victory, redeemed the castle of Ajmér, and declared his tributary alliance null and void. But the genius of Sindia, and the talents of De Boigne, soon recovered this loss, and in four years the Mahratta marched with a force such as Indian warfare was stranger to, to redeem that day's disgrace. In S 1847 (A D 1791) the murderous battles of Patun and Mairta took place, in which Rajpoot courage was heroically but fruitlessly displayed against European tactics and unlimited resources, and where neither intrigue nor treason was wanting. The result was the imposition of a contribution of sixty lacs of rupees, or £600,000, and as so much could not be drained from the country, goods and chattels were everywhere distrained, and hostages given for the balance

“Ajmér, which had revolted on the short-lived triumph of Tonga, was



once more surrendered, and lost for ever to Marwar When invested by De Boigne, the faithful governor, Dumraj, placed in the dilemma of a disgraceful surrender or disobedience to his prince's summons, swallowed diamond-powder 'Tell the raja,' said this faithful servant, 'thus only could I testify my obedience, and over my dead body alone could a Southron enter Ajmér'"—Tod, vol II pp 133-134

### JESALMERE P 104

"The majority of the inhabitants of Jaisalmer State are Yadu Bhati Rajputs and claim a very ancient lineage They take their name from an ancestor named Bhati, who was renowned as a warrior when the tribe were settled in the Punjab The clan was driven southwards by the King of Ghazni across the Sutlej and found a refuge in the Indian Desert, which has been henceforth their home It is probable, according to Tod, that, like the Rahtore Rajputs, the clan is descended from one of the Indo-Scythic tribes, who penetrated into Hindustan at a very remote period. The Bhatīs, subsequent to their entry into the desert tract, engaged in constant struggles with the neighbouring tribes, whom they overcame They established themselves successively at Tarnot, Deorāwal, and Jaisalmer Deorāwal was founded by Deoraj, who is esteemed the real founder of the present ruling family Deoraj was the first to take the title of Rāwal He is said to have been born in 836 A.D In 1156 Jaisal, the sixth in succession from Deoraj, founded the fort and city of Jaisalmer, and made it his capital Jaisal was succeeded by several warlike princes, who were constantly engaged in raids and battles But the taste for freebooting proved disastrous On two occasions, namely in 1294 and shortly afterwards, the Bhatīs so enraged

the Emperor Alá-ud-din that the imperial army captured and sacked the fort and city of Jaisalmer, which for some time remained deserted. The reign of Ráwal Sabal Singh marks an epoch in Bhati history, for this prince, by acknowledging the supremacy of Sháh Jahán, was the first of his line to hold his dominions as a fief of the Delhi Empire.

Jaisalmer had now arrived at the height of its power, the territory extended north to the Sutlej, comprised the whole of Baháwalpur westward to the Indus, and to the east and south included many districts subsequently annexed by the Rahtores, and incorporated in Jodhpur and Bikaner. But from this time till the accession of Ráwal Mulráj in 1762 the fortunes of the State rapidly declined, and most of the outlying provinces were wrested from Jaisalmer. Owing, however, to its isolated situation, the State escaped the ravages of the Marathas " (*Imperial Gazetteer of India* )

According to Tod, the local bards say that when Jesalmere was stormed and captured by Nawab Mahboob Khan in A.D. 1295 it had been besieged for nine years. 16,000 Musalmans and all the garrison, with 24,000 females immolated at the Johur, are said to have perished. The Mahomedans kept the castle for two years and then abandoned the place. A few years after Dudha repaired Jesalmere and raided on Ajmere. This led to a second assault by the Mahomedans. For services rendered to Timoor Shah the chief Gursi obtained a grant of his hereditary domains and re-established Jesalmere A.D. 1306.

## INFANTICIDE P 112

"The Dahima emptied his coffers" (says Chund, the pole star of the Rajpoots) "on the marriage of his daughter with Pirthiraj, but he filled them 'with the praises of mankind.' The same bard retails every article of

these daejas or 'dowers,' which thus become precedents for future ages, and the 'lac passao' then established for the chief bardai has become a model to posterity. Even now the Rana of Oodipoor, in his season of poverty, at the recent marriage of his daughter bestowed 'the gift of a lac' on the chief bard, though the articles of gold, horses, clothes, etc., were included in the estimate, and at an undue valuation, which rendered the gift not quite so precious as in the days of the Chohan"—Tod, vol. 1 p 638

### RANTHAMBOR P 122

"From the time of its surrender by Rao Soorjun to Akber, the importance of this castle was established by its becoming the first *sircar*, or 'department,' in the province of Ajmér, consisting of no less than 'eighty-three mahals,' or extensive fiefs, in which were comprehended not only Boondi and Kotah, and all their dependencies, but the entire state of Scopoor, and all the petty fiefs south of the Bangunga, the aggregate of which now constitutes the state of Amber. In fact, with the exception of Mahmoodabad in Bengal, Ranthumbor was the most extensive sircar of the empire. In the decrepitude of the empire, this castle was maintained by a veteran commander as long as funds and provisions lasted, but these failing, in order to secure it from falling into the hands of the Mahrattas, and thus being lost for ever to the throne, he sought out a Rajpoot prince, to whom he might entrust it. He applied to Boondi, but the Hara, dreading to compromise his fealty if unable to maintain it, refused the boon, and having no alternative, he resigned it to the prince of Ambér as a trust which he could no longer defend"—Tod, vol. II pp 492-493

## THE DISCROWNING OF OMÉD SINGH P 123

In his *Annals of Haraoti* (chapter iv) Tod tells how the young Oméd fought against the Jeypore army

“The steed of Oméda was struck by a cannon-ball, and the intestines protruded from the wound. The intrepidity of the youthful hero, nobly seconded by his kin and clan, was unavailing, and the chieftains, fearing he would throw away a life the preservation of which they all desired, entreated he would abandon the contest, observing ‘that if he survived, Boondi must be theirs; but if he was slain, there was an end of all their hopes.’

“With grief he submitted, and as they gained the Sowalli Pass, which leads to Indurgurh, he dismounted to breathe his faithful steed, and as he loosened the girths, it expired. Oméda sat down and wept. Hunja was worthy of such a mark of his esteem—he was a steed of Irák, the gift of the king to his father, whom he had borne in many an encounter. Nor was this natural ebullition of the young Hara a transient feeling. Hunja’s memory was held in veneration, and the first act of Oméda, when he recovered his throne, was to erect a statue to the steed who bore him so nobly on the day of Dublana. It stands in the square (*choub*) of the city, and receives the reverence of each Hara, who links his history with one of the brightest of their achievements, though obscured by momentary defeat.

“Oméda gained Indurgurh, which was close at hand, on foot, but this traitor to the name of Hara, who had acknowledged the supremacy of Ambér, not only refused his prince a horse in his adversity, but warned him off the domain, asking ‘if he meant to be the ruin of Indurgurh as well as Boondi?’ Disdaining to drink water within its bounds, the young prince, stung by this perfidious mark of inhospitality, took the direction of Kurwan

Its chief made amends for the other's churlishness he advanced to meet him, offered such aid as he had to give, and presented him with a horse. Dismissing his faithful kinsmen to their homes, and begging their swords when fortune might be kinder, he regained his old retreat, the ruined palace of Rampoor, amongst the ravines of the Chumbul "

Tod adds the following foot-note —

"I have made my salaam to the representative of Hunja, and should have graced his neck with a chaplet on every military festival, had I dwelt among the Haras "

The act which led to the abdication of Uméd Singh after he had recovered his dominions is thus related —

"An act of revenge stained the reputation of Oméda, naturally virtuous, and but for which deed we should have to paint him as one of the bravest, wisest, and most faultless characters which Rajpoot history has recorded. Eight years had elapsed since the recovery of his dominions, and we have a right to infer that his wrongs and their authors had been forgotten, or rather forgiven, for human nature can scarcely forget so treacherous an act as that of his vassal of Indurgurh, on the defeat of Dublana. As so long a time had passed since the restoration without the penalty of his treason being exacted, it might have been concluded that the natural generosity of this high-minded prince had co-operated with a wise policy, in passing over the wrong without foregoing his right to avenge it. The degenerate Rajpoot, who could at such a moment witness the necessities of his prince and refuse to relieve them, could never reflect on that hour without self-abhorrence, but his spirit was too base to offer reparation by a future life of duty, he cursed the magnanimity of the man he had injured, hated him for his very forbearance, and aggravated the part he had acted by fresh injuries, and on a

point too delicate to admit of being overlooked Oméda had 'sent the coco-nut,' the symbol of matrimonial alliance, to Madhu Sing, in the name of his sister It was received in a full assembly of all the nobles of the court, and with the respect due to one of the most illustrious races of Rajpootana Deo Sing of Indurgurh was at that time on a visit at Jeipoor, and the compliment was paid him by the Raja of asking 'what fame said of the daughter of Boodh Sing?' It is not impossible that he might have sought this opportunity of further betraying his prince for his reply was an insulting innuendo, leading to doubts as to the purity of her blood That it was grossly false was soon proved by the solicitation of her hand by Raja Beejy Sing of Marwar The coco nut was returned to Boondi—an insult never to be forgiven by a Rajpoot

"In S 1813 (A D 1757) Oméda went to pay his devotions at the shrine of Beejaséní Máta ('the mother of victory'), near Kurwur Being in the vicinity of Indurgurh, he invited its chief to join the assembled vassals with their families, and though dissuaded, Deo Sing obeyed, accompanied by his son and grandson All were cut off at one fell swoop, and the line of the traitor was extinct as if the air of heaven should not be contaminated by the smoke of their ashes, Oméda commanded that the body of the calumnious traitor and his issue should be thrown into the lake His fief of Indurgurh was given to his brother, between whom and the present incumbent four generations have passed away

"Fifteen years elapsed, during which the continual scenes of disorder around him furnished ample occupation for his thoughts Yet, in the midst of all, would intrude the remembrance of this single act, in which he had usurped the powers of Him to whom alone it belongs to execute vengeance Though no voice was lifted up against the deed, though he had a moral

conviction that a traitor's death was the due of Deo Sing, his soul, generous as it was brave, revolted at the crime, however sanctified by custom,<sup>1</sup> which confounds the innocent with the guilty. To appease his conscience, he determined to abdicate the throne and pass the rest of his days in penitential rites, and traversing, in the pilgrim's garb, the vast regions of India, to visit the sacred shrines of his faith.

"In S. 1827 (A.D. 1771) the imposing ceremony of 'joograj,' which terminated the political existence of Omeda, was performed. An image of the prince was made, and a pyre was erected, on which it was consumed. The hair and whiskers of Ajit, his successor, were taken off, and offered to the manes, lamentation and wailing were heard in the rinwās,<sup>2</sup> and the twelve days of matam, or 'mourning,' were passed as if Oméda had really deceased, on the expiration of which, the installation of his successor took place, when Ajit Sing was proclaimed prince of the Haras of Boondi."—Tod, vol. II pp. 494-495

#### THE JATS P. 140

In his *History of the Rajput Tribes* Tod writes — "In all the ancient catalogues of the thirty six royal races of India the Jit has a place, though by none is he ever styled 'Rajpoot', nor am I aware of any instance of a Rajpoot's intermarriage with a Jit. It is a name widely disseminated over

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<sup>1</sup> "The laws of revenge are dreadfully absolute. Had the sons of Deo Sing survived, the feud upon their liege lord would have been entailed with their estate. It is a nice point for a subject to balance between fidelity to his prince and a father's feud."

<sup>2</sup> The queen's apartments

India, though it does not now occupy a very elevated place amongst the inhabitants, belonging chiefly to the agricultural classes

“In the Punjab they still retain their ancient name of Jat On the Jumna and Ganges they are styled Jats, of whom the chief of Bhurtpoor is the most conspicuous On the Indus and on Saurashtra they are termed Juts The greater portion of the husbandmen in Rajst’han are Jits, and there are numerous tribes beyond the Indus, now proselytes to the Mahomedan religion, who derive their origin from this class ”

Sir Lepel Griffin in his recent book on Ranjit Singh (*Rulers of India* series) writes —

“The origin of the Jats is shrouded in much uncertainty and has been the subject of long discussion Some distinguished writers have found for them a Getic origin, but the traditions of the Punjab Jats in almost all cases refer to a Rajput descent, and emigration to the Punjab from Central India ”

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“They hold a social place below the Brahman, the Rajput, and the Khattri, but they themselves assert an equality with the second and a superiority over the third of these castes, a claim which their historical record and present importance justify They are seen at their best in the Sikh districts above the rivers Beas and Sutlej ”

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“The virtues of the Jats are thus identical with those of the Sikhs who have come out of this caste.”



*"NOT ONE WHITE SOLDIER NEAR" Pp 143, 144*

In his narrative of events in Rajputana during the Mutiny the Governor General's Agent, Brigadier General G. St. P. Lawrence, wrote —

"There was not a single European soldier in Rajpootana"; and in a later paragraph thus described the loyal attitude of the Rajput princes and people generally during the Mutiny —

"I would point out that with three distinct mutinies in its heart, with every element for both Moslem and Hindoo fanaticism, with a dangerous combination among Marwar and other malcontent nobles, with a rebel nucleus at Mundisore close to its southern frontier, with thousands of discarded Hindoos of the lowest class in the ranks of the armies of its princes in Rajpootana, the revolt in India was met with *no* sympathy from Rajpoot rulers, nobles, or population generally, that whilst our provinces have been disorganised scenes of riot and slaughter, this vast territory has hardly called for any armed interference, but has remained a rock of strength, and blessed the wise and just policy which has made the British power, relieving that of the Tartar and Mahratta dynasty, so respected and welcome, as to make the Rajpoot feel his interests identical with ours, and his independent freedom in the scale with the maintenance of British supremacy."

## ULWAR P 145

We hear of Mewat, the country which now comprises more than half the Ulwar State, doing homage to Bisaldeo Chauhan of Ajmere in A.D. 764. It appears then to have belonged to Jada Rajputs. In A.D. 1235 it was apparently under the control of Emperor Shamsuddin Altamash, and the

Mewatis generally had accepted the faith, with Hindu observances still grafted on to it, of their Mahomedan conquerors. The famous Bahadur Nahr, the reputed founder of the Khairatis, was originally a Jadu Rajput, and the Mewati chief Hasun Khan assisted the Rajputs in resisting Babar who subjugated the country in A D 1526.

Aurangzeb gave Ulwar in jagir to Sawai Jai Singh of Jeypore who held it for a few years. The Jats from Bhurtpore overran the country from A D 1720 to about 1770, when the Narukas, a sept descended from the Kachwahas of Jeypore, joined in the struggle, and their first chief Partap Singh held the fort and town from 1775 to 1791, when he was succeeded by Bukhtawar Singh who ruled till 1815. Then the third chief Banno Singh, who is held in high estimation by his people, ruled till 1857, when he was succeeded by Sheodan Singh who died in 1874, being succeeded by Mungal Singh.

THE END



